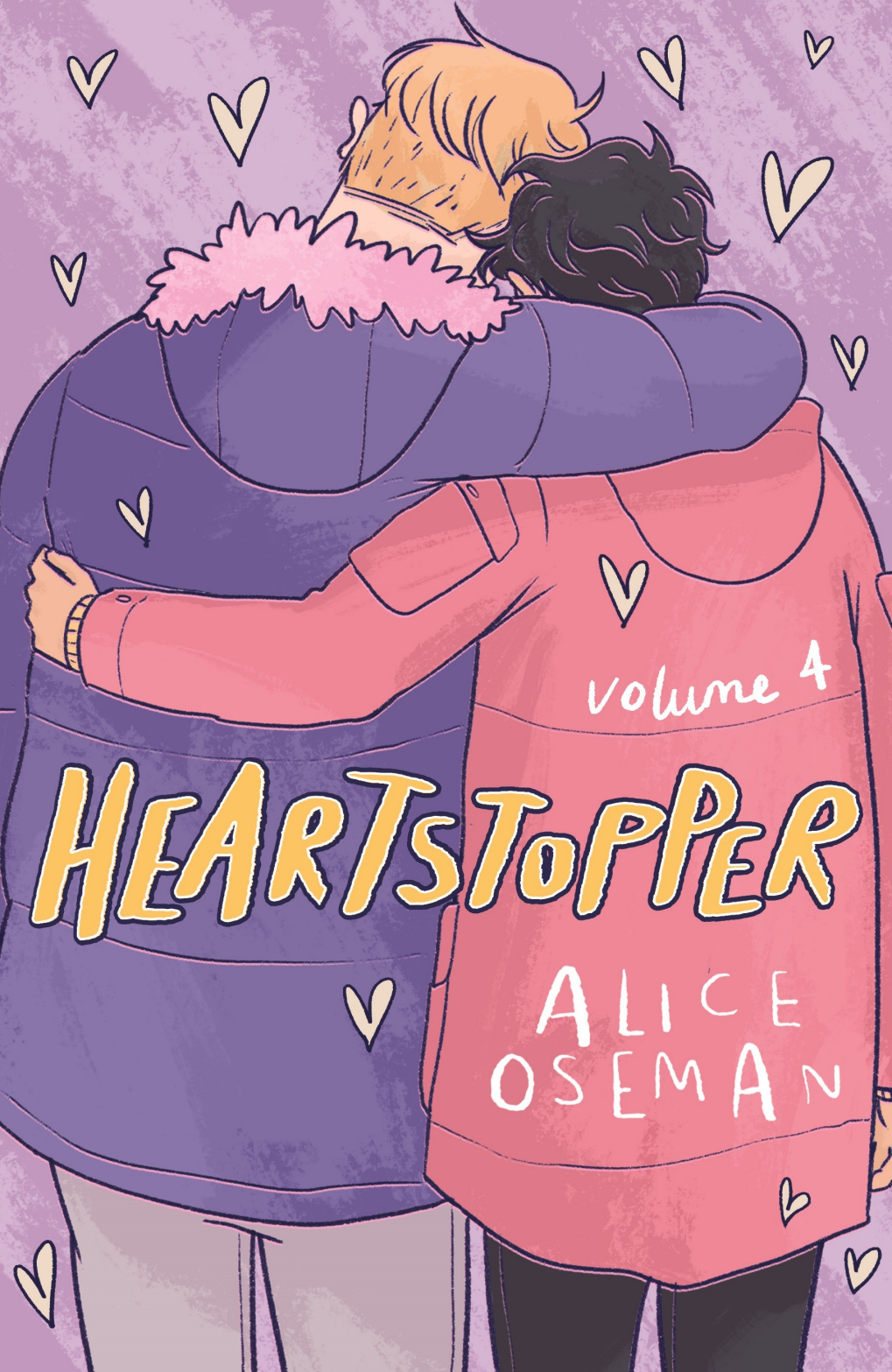
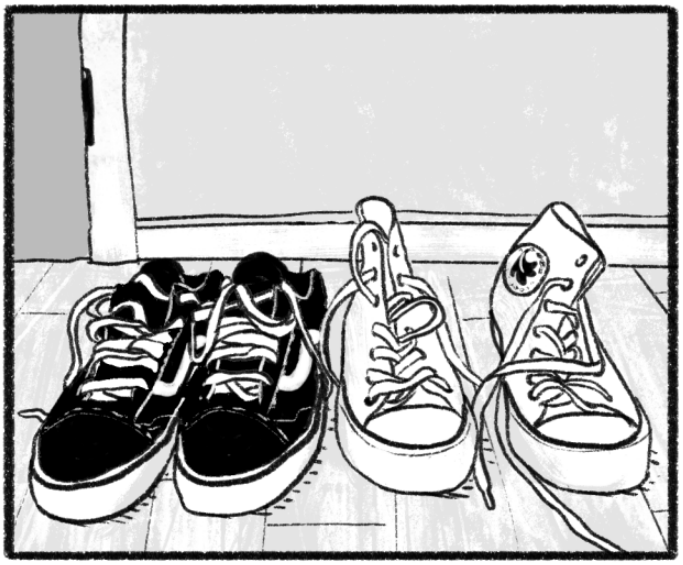

volume 4
HEARTSTOPPER
ALICE OSEMAN

5. LOVE



Nick...

I love you.

AUGUST

Um- I mean- I'm in love with you.

I... just wanted you to know.

And... you don't have to say it back yet...
FIDDLE
SHUFFLE
or ever, I guess?
I mean- I hope you do say it one day because I'm properly in love with you and I hope you'll feel the same way eventually but please don't feel pressured to-

MUSE
...

THUNK

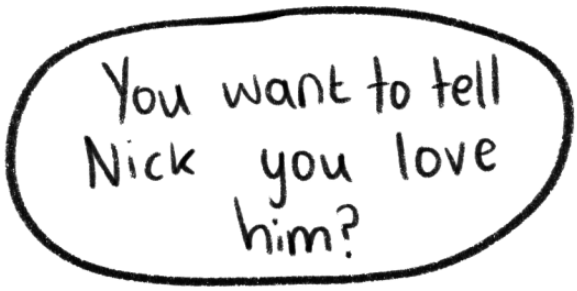
God.
MUSE
I Was Born for This

...
What are you doing?

Stop spying on me!!
Haha!
Stop declaring your love so loudly, then.
LEAP
Argh- Oliver, you're getting so heavy!!

Why were you talking to yourself?
I wasn't!!
You were!! We heard you!
SIT
You were like
oooOooOOh Nick I love you soooOOOOO much
That's it. Tickle time.
AAAAA NOOOOOO

AHAHAAA HAHA HA
That's what you get for teasing your big brother!
HAHA HA A AAAHA


You want to tell Nick you love him?

um

yeah

so tell him, then.
It- it's not that easy!!!
?
It's probably too early. And if he doesn't feel the same, it'll just make things weird.
And I don't want him to do the awkward "I love you too" thing just because he feels obligated to say it back.
LEAN

You don't think he feels the same?
You've been hanging out all summer.
He's literally obsessed with you.

AAAH
When are you next seeing him?
...Today.
We're all going to the beach. And then...
Nick's going on holiday for three weeks.
I won't see him till we go back to school.

So... it's my last chance to tell him this summer.
SIT UP
Tell him today.
Noooooo
Yes.
Charlie?
Yes?

If you say 'I love you' to Nick,
does that mean you'll stay together forever?
Haha, well... I hope so!
yaaaay!!!

HOMER
The Iliad
If Nick joins our family then I'll have TWO big brothers and that's more than anyone in my class!

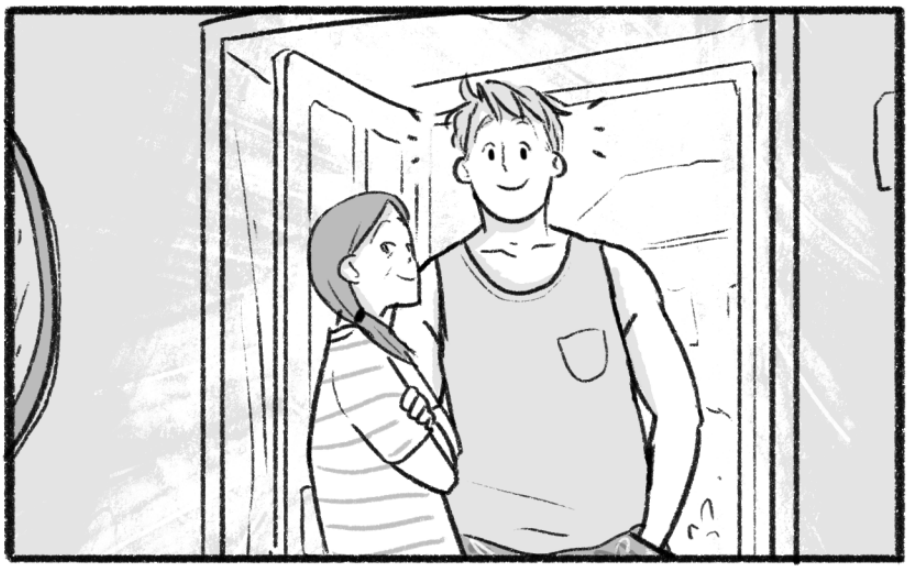
MUM
Charlie! Nick's here to pick you up!

Okay! Just coming!

GRAB

What are you up to today?
I dunno. Might go into town. I need a new school bag.
You could come to the beach with us?
Nah. I don't like the sun.

And how's your mum?
Yeah, she's good! Stressing about our holiday haha



Hey

... Hey
?

What?
Um... just... never seen you in a tank top
Never seen you in a cap!
Ah~
Nick!!! Guess what! Charlie-

??
mmph
Nope.
Nope
nope
nope
nope
nope.

Here we are!
Finally
Yaaay!

Okay, anyone else to pick up?
No, we're meeting Tara, Darcy, and Sahar there!
How are you doing, Charlie? Your family well?
I'm good, thanks, Mariam! Yeah, they're all good!
MUM can we please go!??
Okay okay!

I'm driving you to the coast out of the goodness of my heart and this is the treatment I get-
Mum.
We're here!!
Thank God. I'm about to pee myself.
CASINO
Elle!! Don't forget to offer them round!
I won't!

Love you! Give me a call when you're ready to come home!
Okay! Love you too!

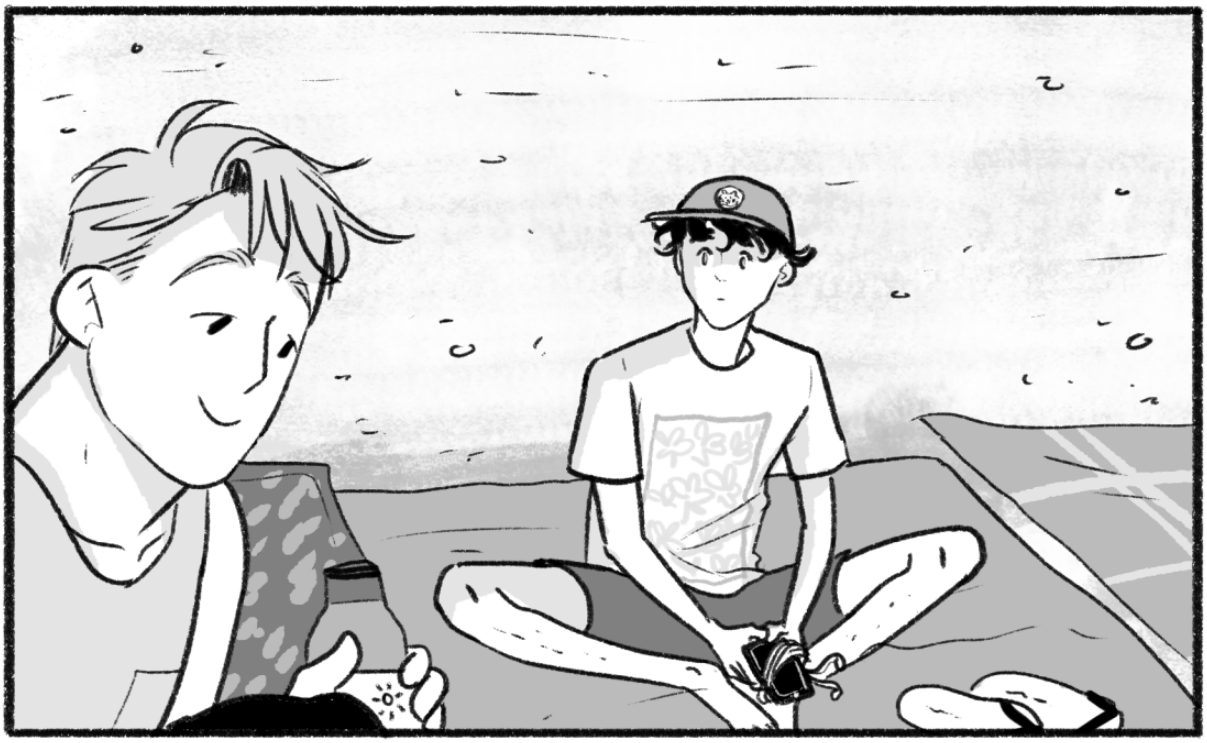
What are they?
Ta'meya! Egyptian falafel. My Mum's gotten suuuuper into Egyptian cooking again since she got back from visiting my grandparents out there.

Can I have one?
You had breakfast like an hour ago!

Hey! There they are!
They're here!
Hey!!
SURF

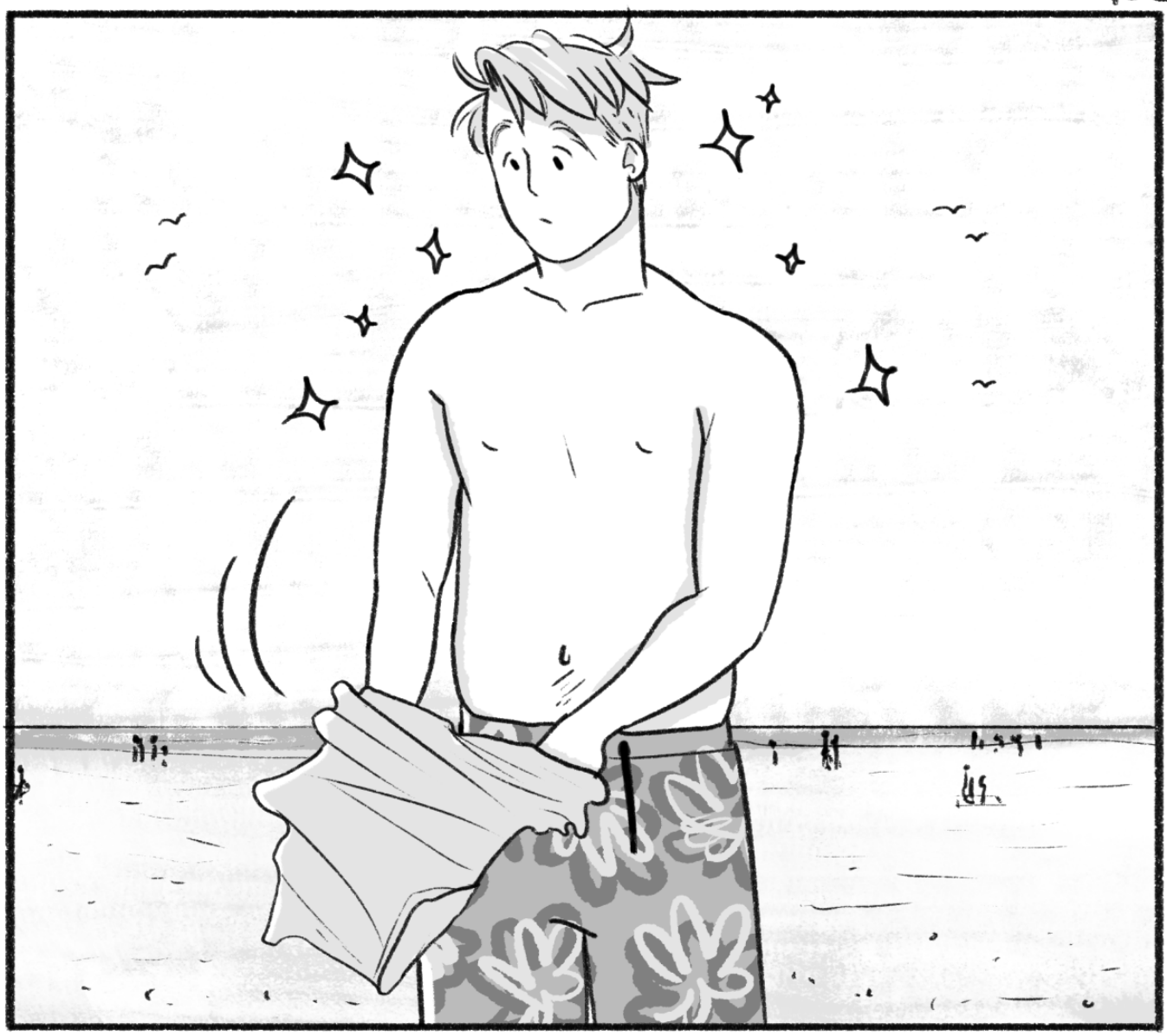
The Paris gang's back together!!

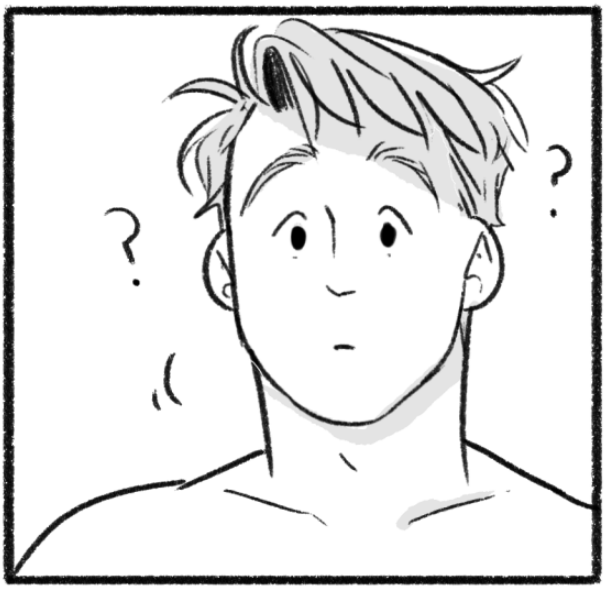
chatter
chatter



PULL

933

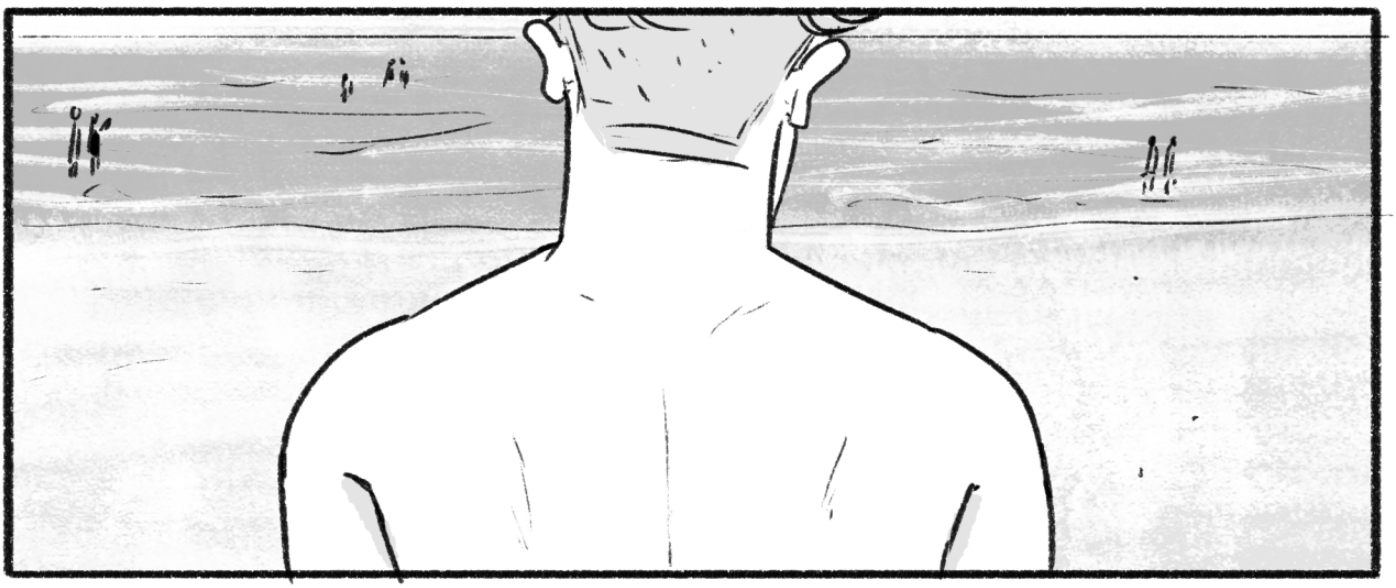


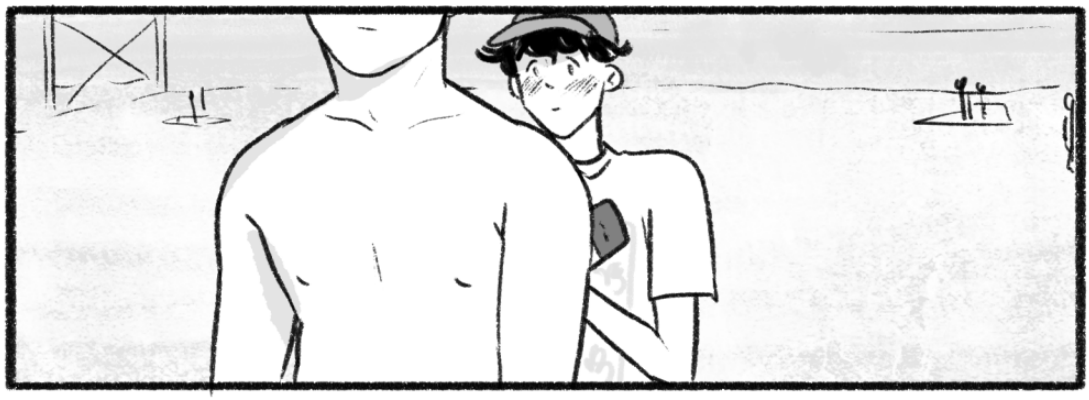


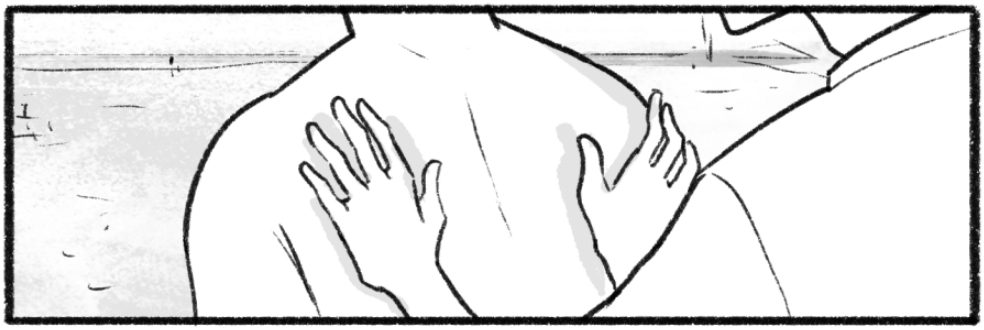
What?
Nothing! Nothing.
PEEk
I love you

Oh... um... well, I...
Thank you, but...
I think it's a bit soon for me to say... that
Sorry.
Charlie?
Charlie??
Charlie!

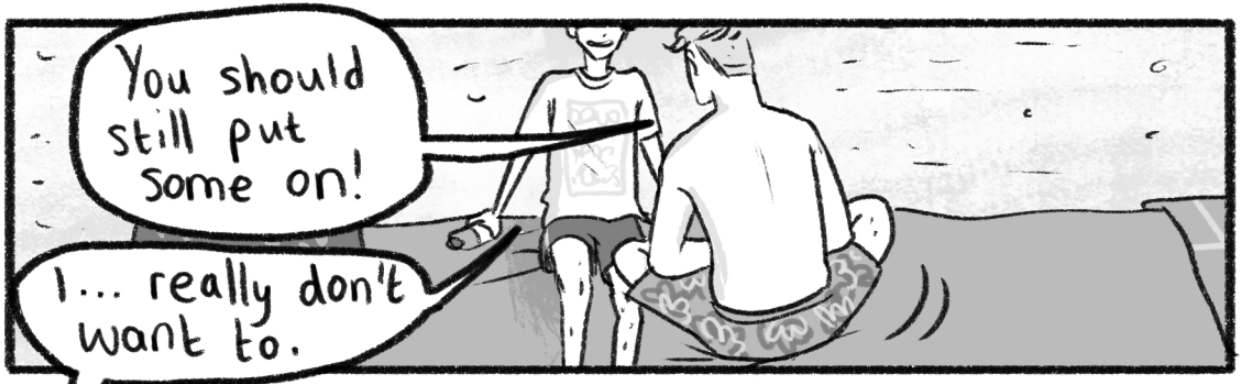
936





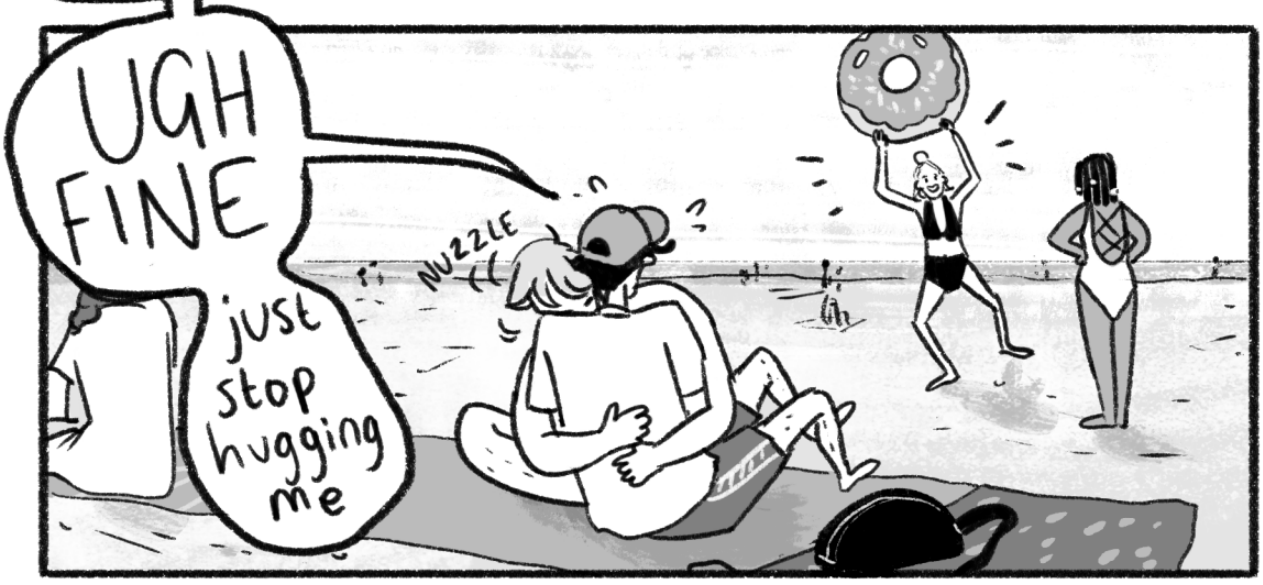


Okay!! All done!!
Thanks!
Do you have some on?
Oh, no, I don't really burn, I just tan.
SNAP


You should still put some on!
I... really don't want to.

NO- Nick, ugh- you're all sticky and gross-

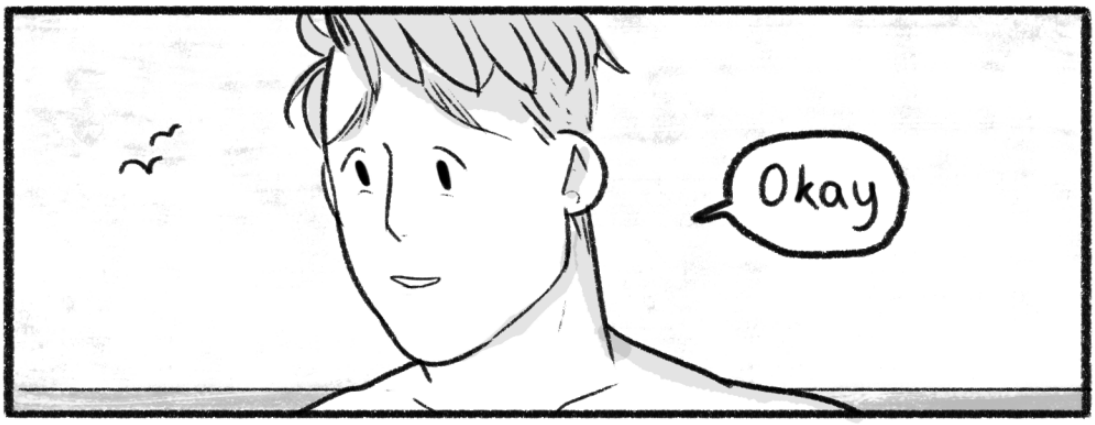
Char... I really don't want you to die of skin cancer
... for God's sake.

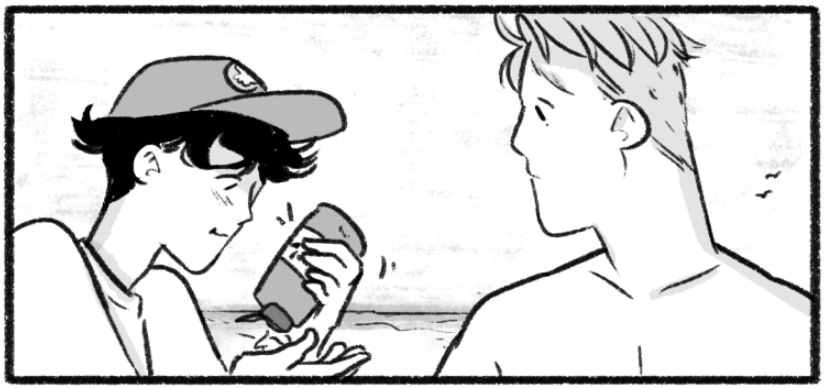

UGH FINE
just stop hugging me
NUZZLE

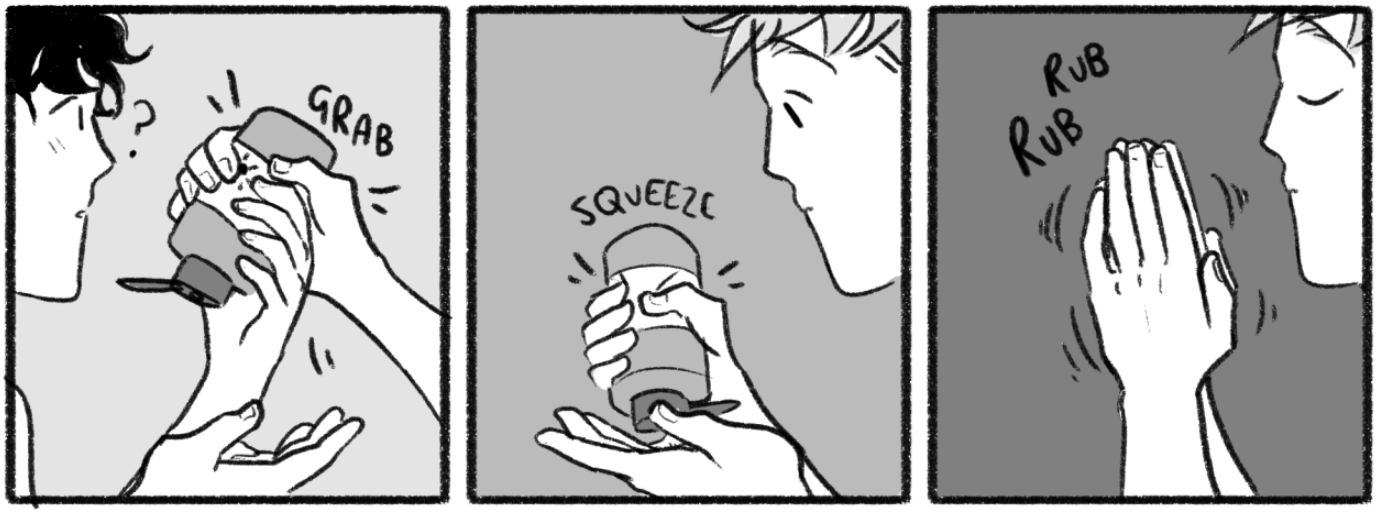
NICK! You coming?
Yeah! One sec!
Are you okay? You seem kind of stressed out.
Oh... yeah... it's just hot.
...

Wanna come in the sea?

Um
...maybe in a bit?

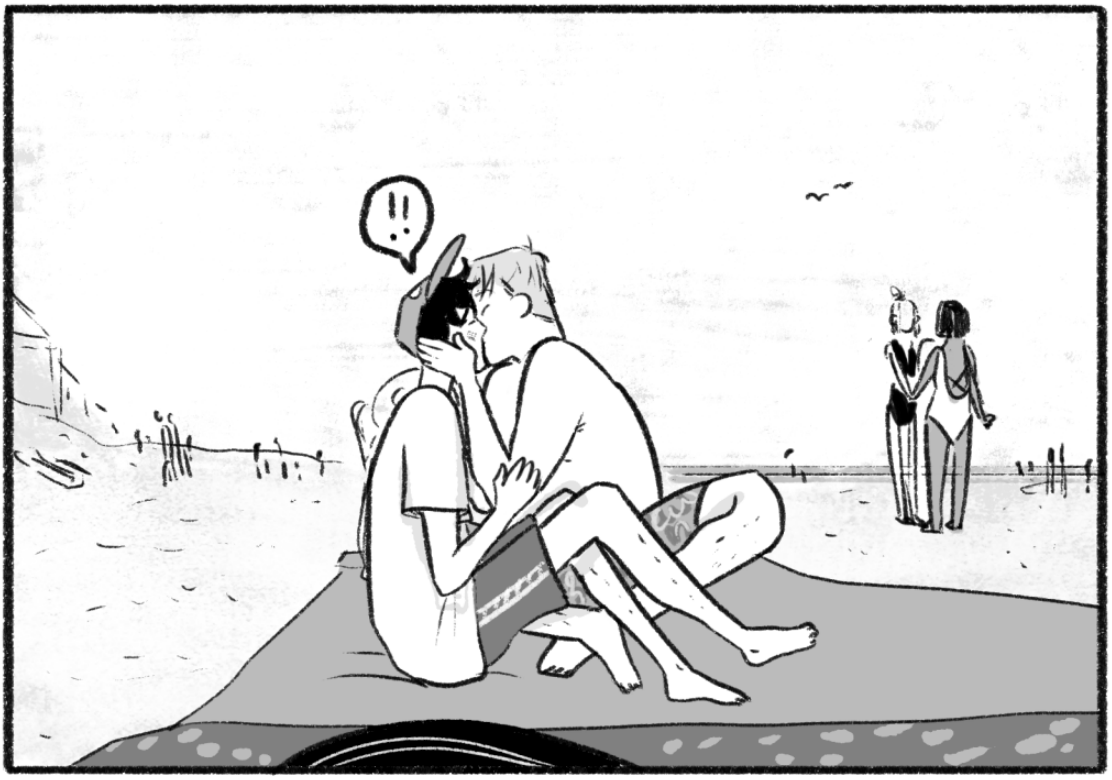

Okay




?
GRAB
SQUEEZE
RUB
RUB

SPLAT

NICK
oh my GOD that is so... gross...


!!

LEAN-

Don't forget to put sun cream on your feet!
Oh my God

Nick! Stop kissing your boyfriend and HURRY UP!

PFFT
STAND

RUB

Haven't you seen him shirtless like a hundred times in the changing room at rugby practice?

This is an entirely different context!!

You do seem a bit stressed, though.
What's up?
...
I want to tell Nick that I'm... um... in love with him.
...Dude. You're already dating.
I know that

I just - I really want to tell him and-
Well... you know I get stressed out about stuff like this.
Yeah, I know.
You're kind of a stressed out person generally.
Ha ha yeah

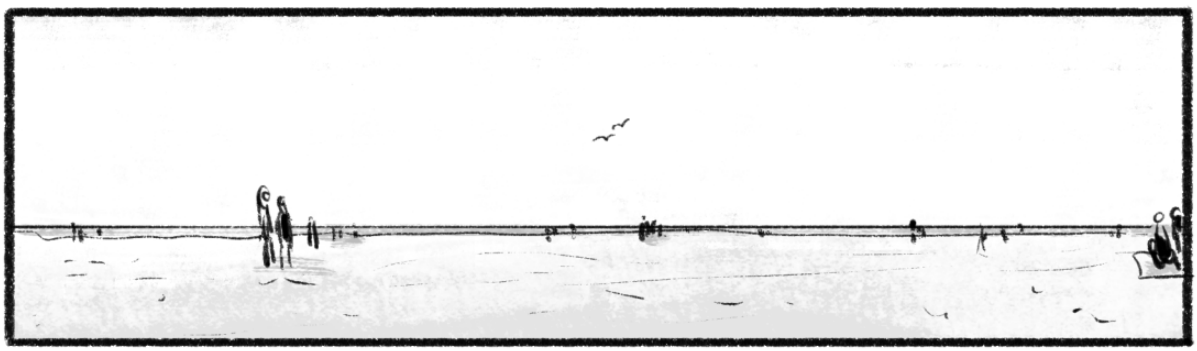
How about a snack to cheer you up?
Um-

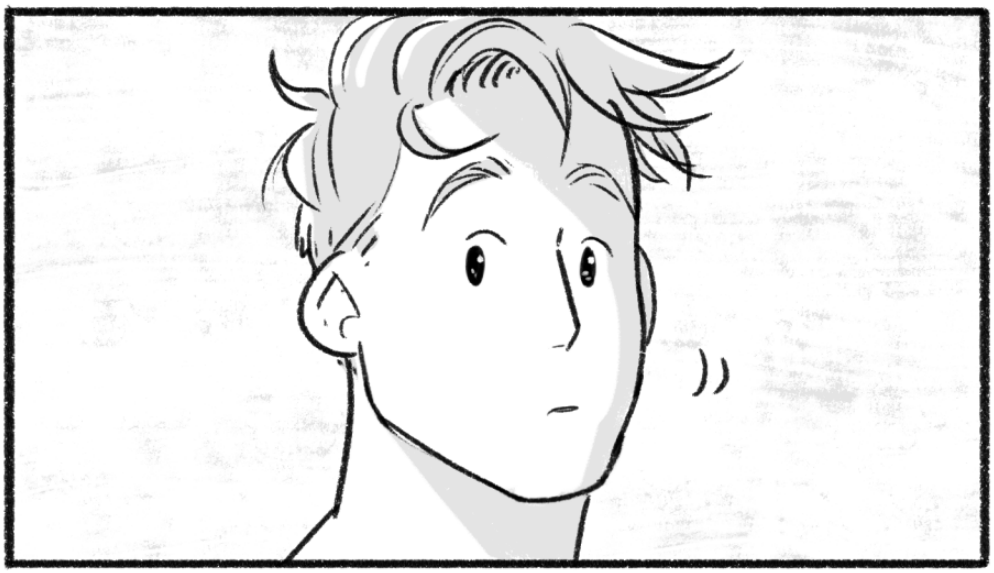
948

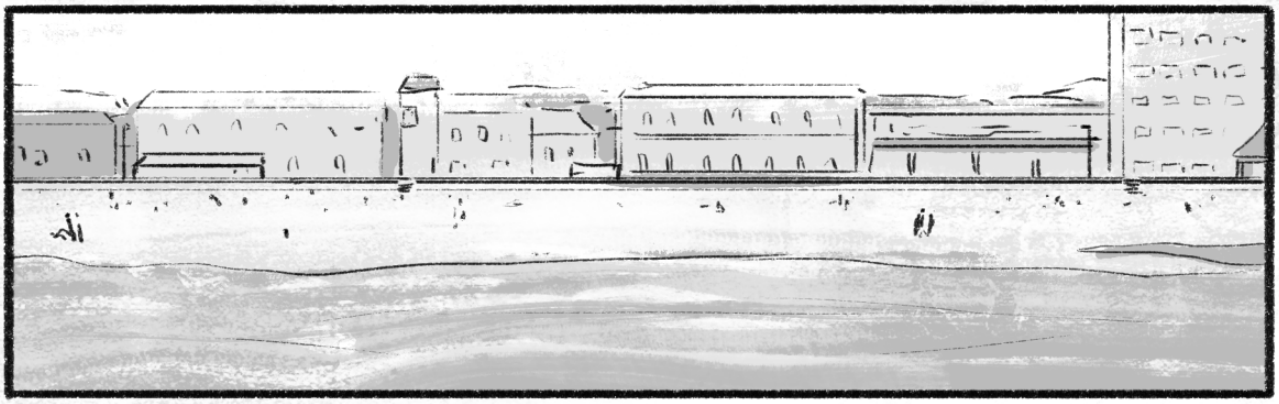
I WILL ACCEPT SOME SNACKS!
Tao! Aled! Where have you been??

The toilets were SO far away.
So, so far away.

You took your hair down.
Yeah? So?
Looks nice
You're still not allowed any snacks until lunch time.
You literally just offered Charlie some!
He's not feeling great. He's allowed some
Charlie?
Maybe in a bit. Thanks though.
CRISPS







SPLASH
!!

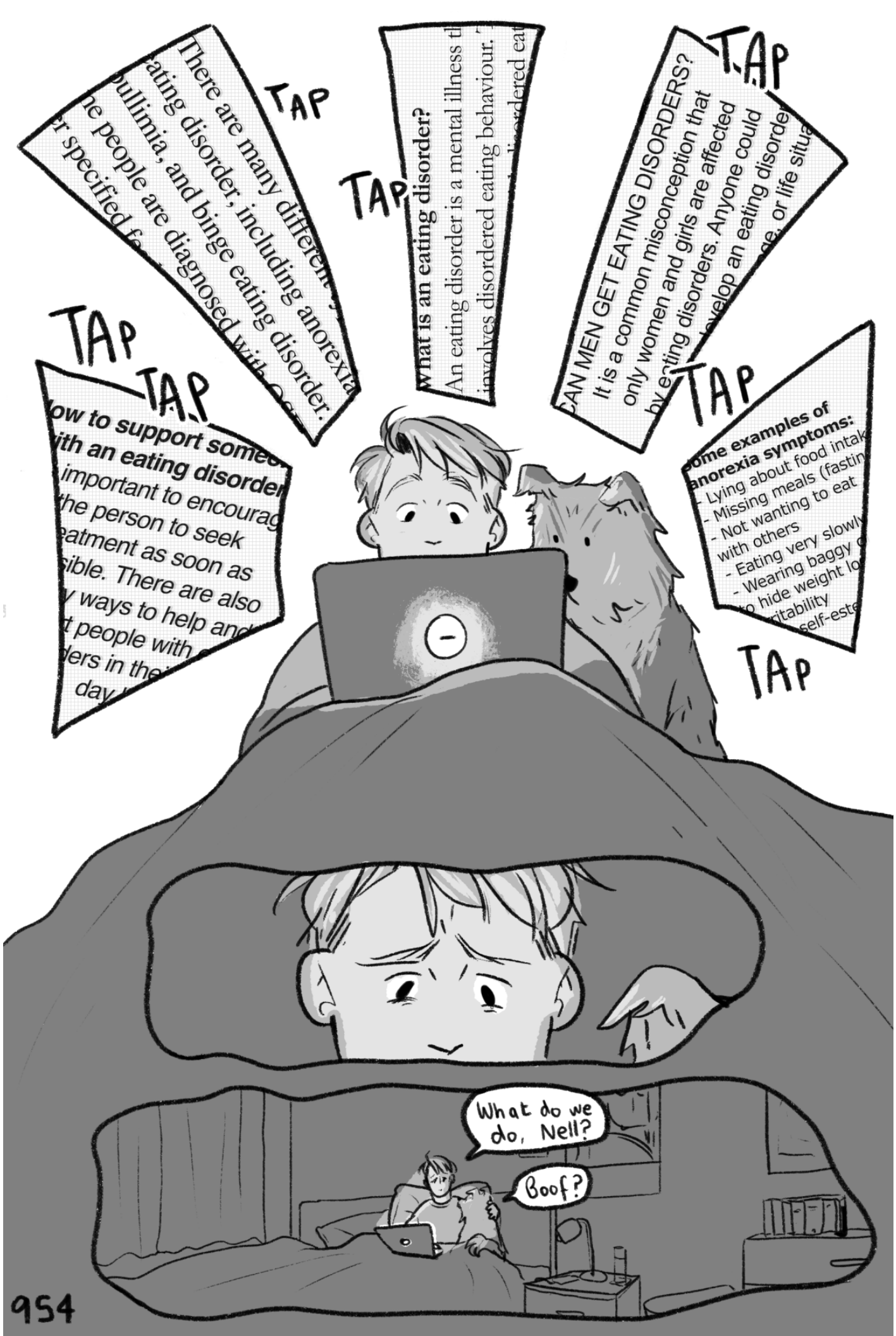
I'm not going any further in. It's too cold.

SPLASH
DARCY!!

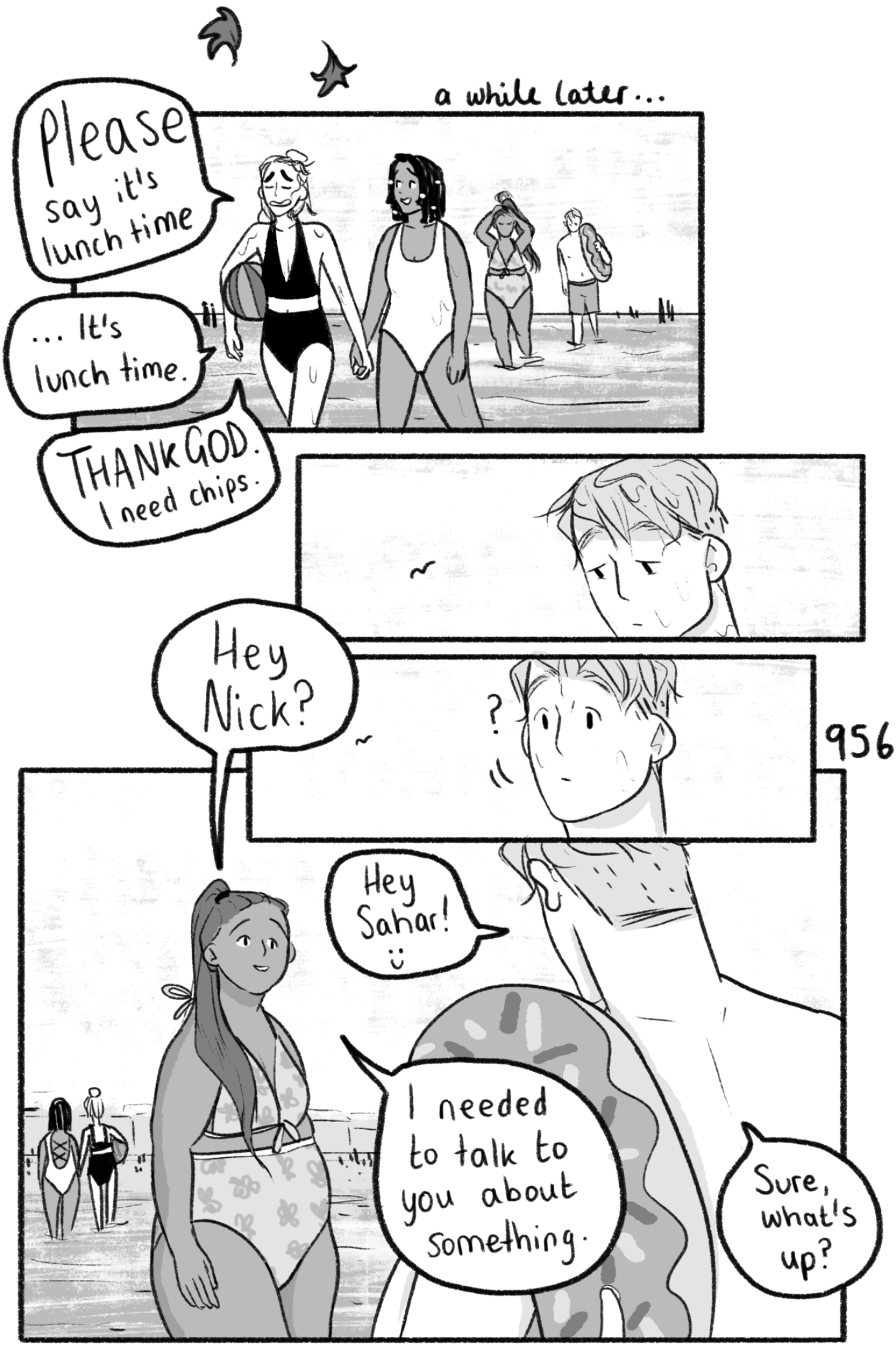
You're welcome :)
You're lucky I love you

AAH the donut's floating away
GRAB IT!!

A few weeks ago...
TAP
TAP
TAP
TAP
?


TAP
There are many different
eating disorder, including anorexia
bulimia, and binge eating disorder.
he people are diagnosed with
r specified
TAP
What is an eating disorder?
An eating disorder is a mental illness th
involves disordered eating behaviour.
TAP
CAN MEN GET EATING DISORDERS?
It is a common misconception that
only women and girls are affected
by eating disorders. Anyone could
develop an eating disorder
TAP
TAP
ow to support someo
ith an eating disorder
important to encourag
the person to seek
eatment as soon as
sible. There are also
y ways to help and
t people with
ders in the
day
TAP
ome examples of
norexia symptoms:
- Lying about food intak
- Missing meals (fastin
- Not wanting to eat
with others
- Eating very slowly
- Wearing baggy c
o hide weight lo
ritability
self-este
TAP
What do we do, Nell?
Boof?
954

Hey Nick!!
Come play volleyball!
?
Okay!
Yaaaaay


a while later...
Please say it's lunch time
... It's lunch time.
THANK GOD. I need chips.
Hey Nick?
?
Hey Sahar!
I needed to talk to you about something.
Sure, what's up?

So... I'm moving to Truham Grammar for Sixth Form.
Oh!
Yeah, and I'm pretty nervous about it. I know you've had girls in Year 12 and 13 for ages, but it's still mostly boys, isn't it?
Yeah... I think we get about ten girls every year compared to like two hundred boys.
That's what I thought. I'm pretty nervous, so... I mean, starting Sixth Form is scary on its own, but moving schools too makes it even more scary.

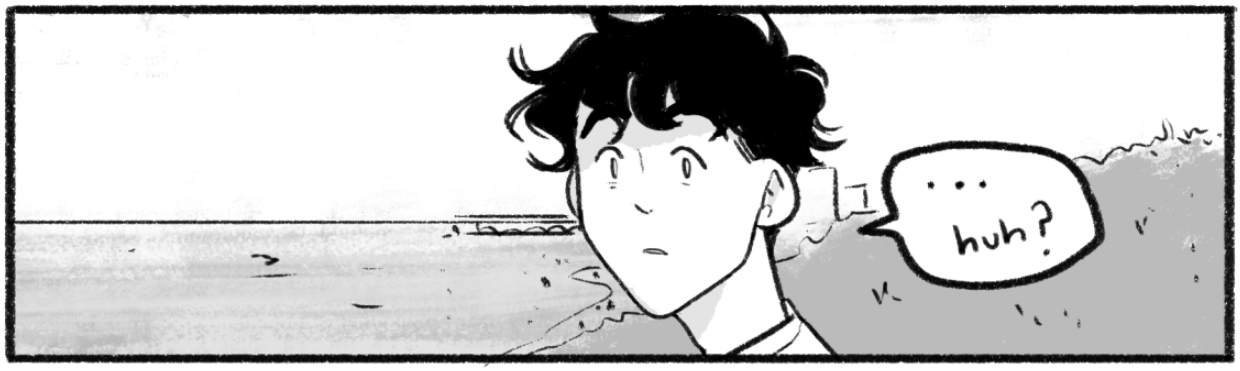
Are you nervous about starting Sixth Form?
Oh, erm...
I've been so busy this summer, I...
...I guess I've been thinking about other things.
how to help someone with an eating disorder
Search

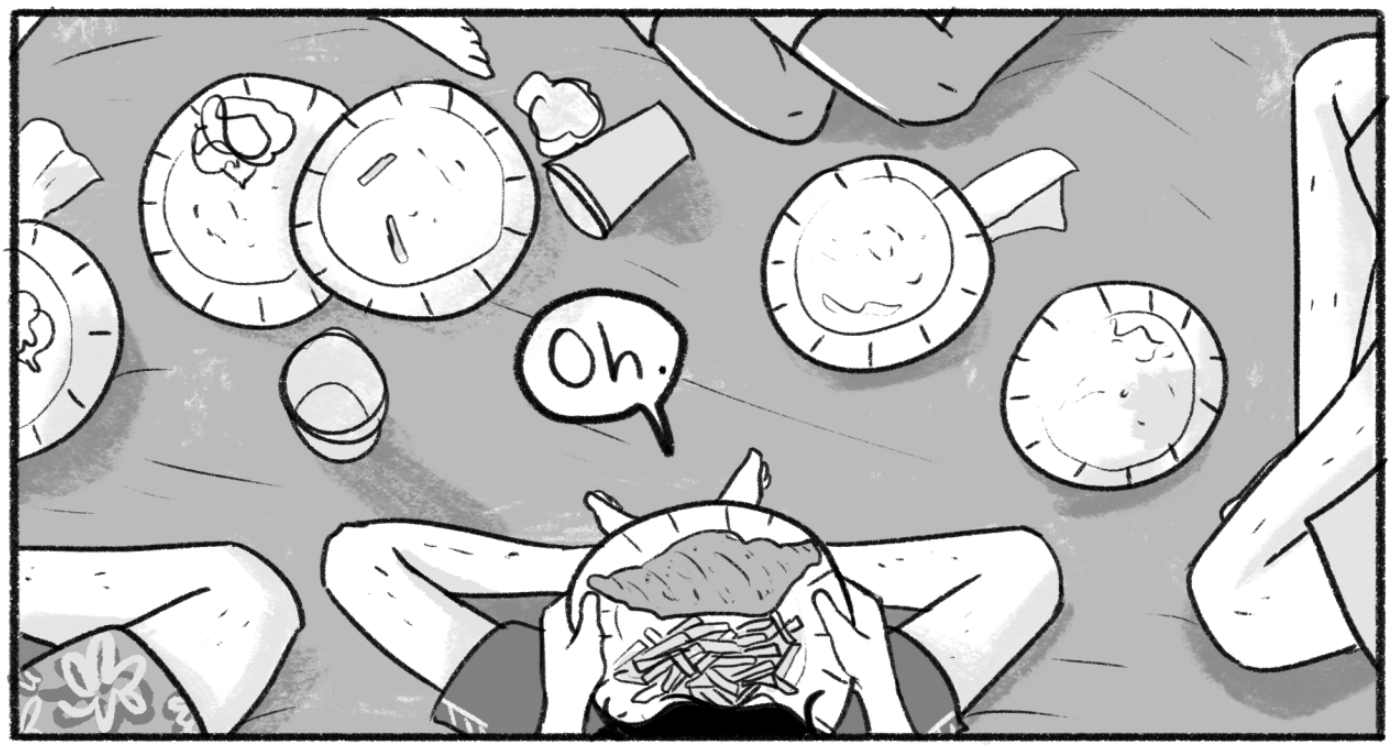
Well... can we hang out at school? It'd be nice to have one friend there.
Ah- yeah, of course!
I can introduce you to the rugby lads.
The 'rugby lads'?
They're nice. I promise.

Oh my God, this is SO much better
Sand is awful
We got chips!!
And fish and sausages
Lunch! Yay!
Please say you got me iced tea
I am starving

Here Charlie!
PICK PICK
Charlie?

whisper
You okay?


...
huh?


Oh.

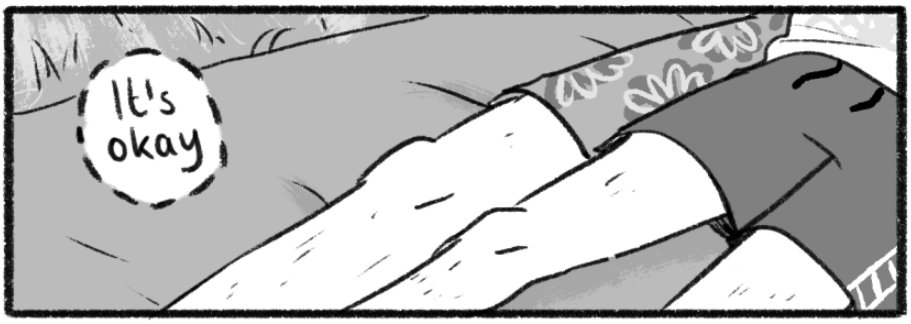
Guess I'm a slow eater today. Ha ha.

FORMING A PLAN.
?
Pfft
Oh hi there
Hi
Wanna go somewhere else to eat?

No, I... I don't want the others to notice.
... We could go get ice cream or something?
Nick, I-
I can't.
I can't today.
I'm sorry.

Hey!!
Are you two gonna keep flirting or are you gonna help us eat these snacks?
squeeze
Ha ha, we're all full-up! Sorry!
Fine, more for us!

Thanks

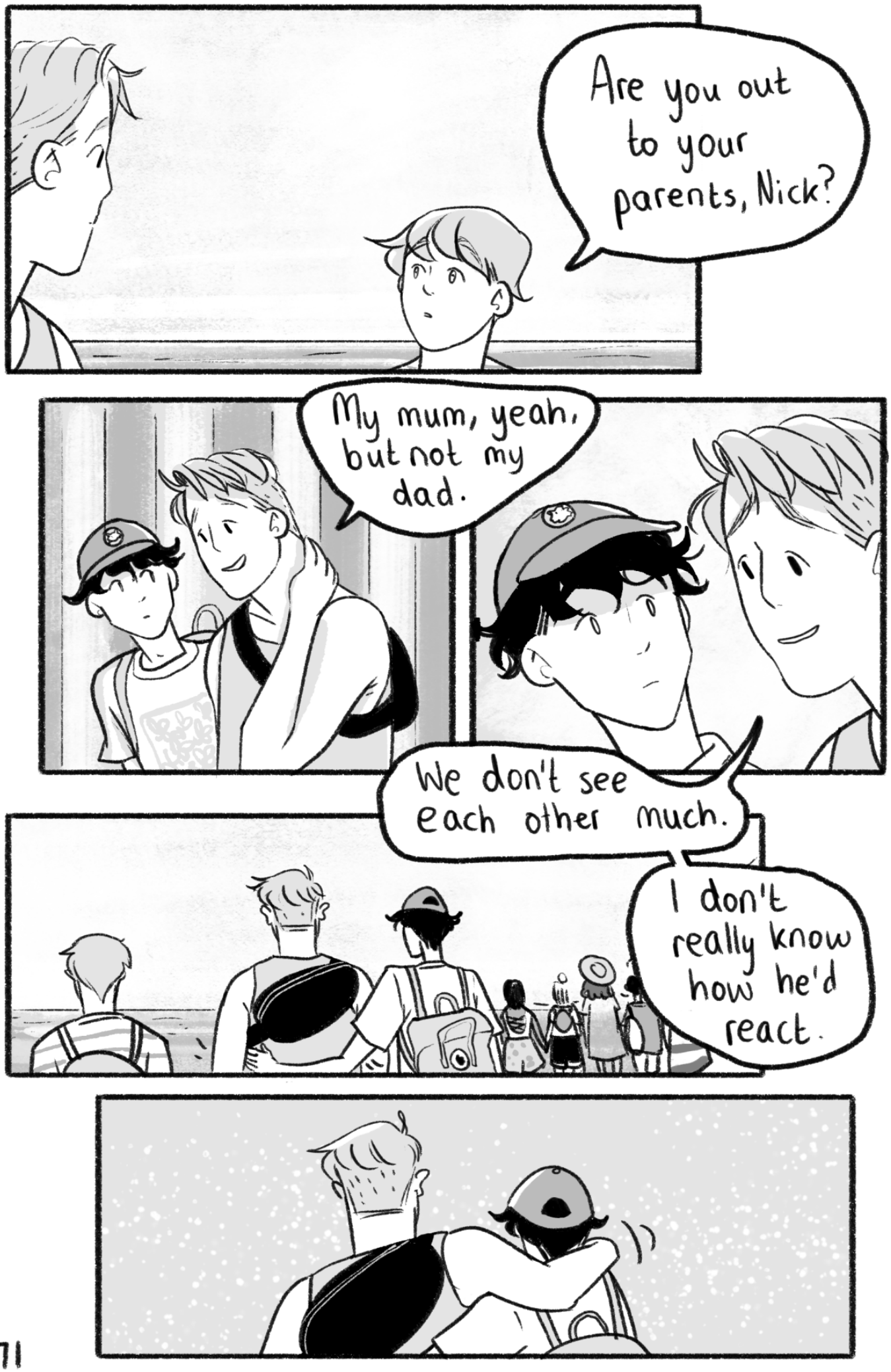

It's okay

Those falafels were so GOOD. I can't believe your mum made them.
Yup. Mum says they're not as good as the ones my grandmother makes back in Egypt.
Do you visit there much? To see your grandparents?
Well... not anymore.
It's really dangerous to be trans in Egypt. You can get arrested or attacked or... worse. Just for being who you are.
I mean, that stuff happens everywhere, but it's a lot more common there, so I haven't been since I was, like, eleven.

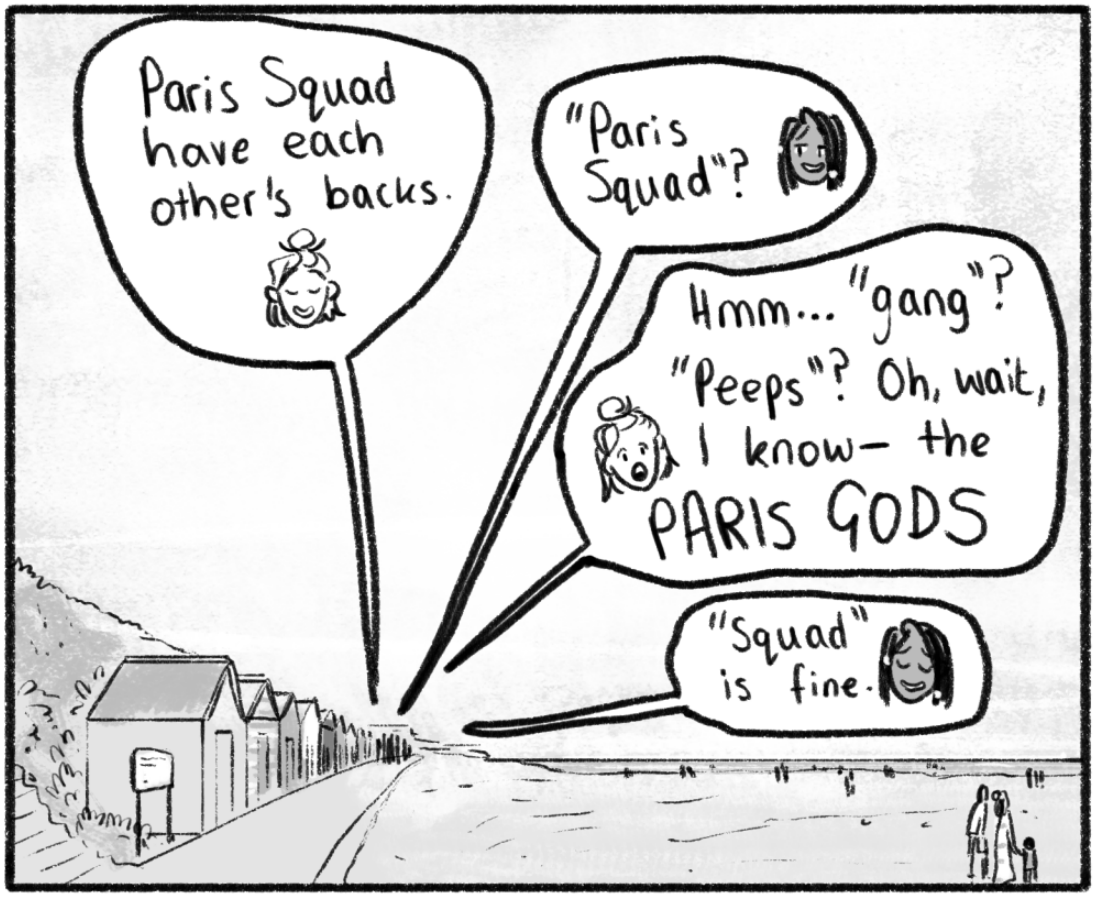
It's okay - we're your family now!
Yes. Anyone who doesn't accept you for you is officially cancelled from your life.
Reasons why I should be your new grandma:
One- I'm great at making cookies.
Two- I'm extremely wise.
Three- If I had any money, I would give you some.
Four-
Darcy doesn't get on with her own family. They're horrible people.
~~~
~~~

They're not just homophobic – they're mean to her all the time. They criticise her about everything.
When we met, I assumed she had the best life because she was so confident and happy.
But I realised that people can be going through stuff... and you just have no idea.
I wish I'd told her sooner-
"I'm here for you."
"I see what you're going through."
squeeze

ACTUALLY
it's all a sob story to persuade Tara's parents to adopt me.
...But then we would be siblings and literally no one wants that.
But I could sleep in your room!!
My mum would make you sleep in the spare room and you know it.


Are you out to your parents, Nick?
My mum, yeah, but not my dad.
We don't see each other much.
I don't really know how he'd react.

But I have you lot. So I'm okay.

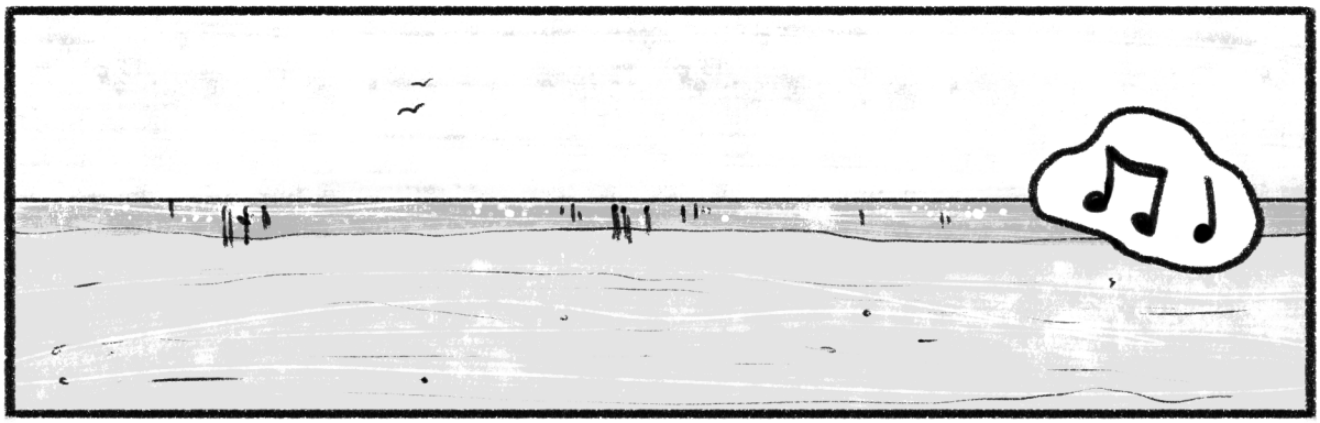

Paris Squad have each other's backs.
"Paris Squad"?
Hmm... "gang"? "Peeps"? Oh, wait, I know— the PARIS GODS
"Squad" is fine.

Hey, we going in the sea?

You know I don't have a swimsuit.

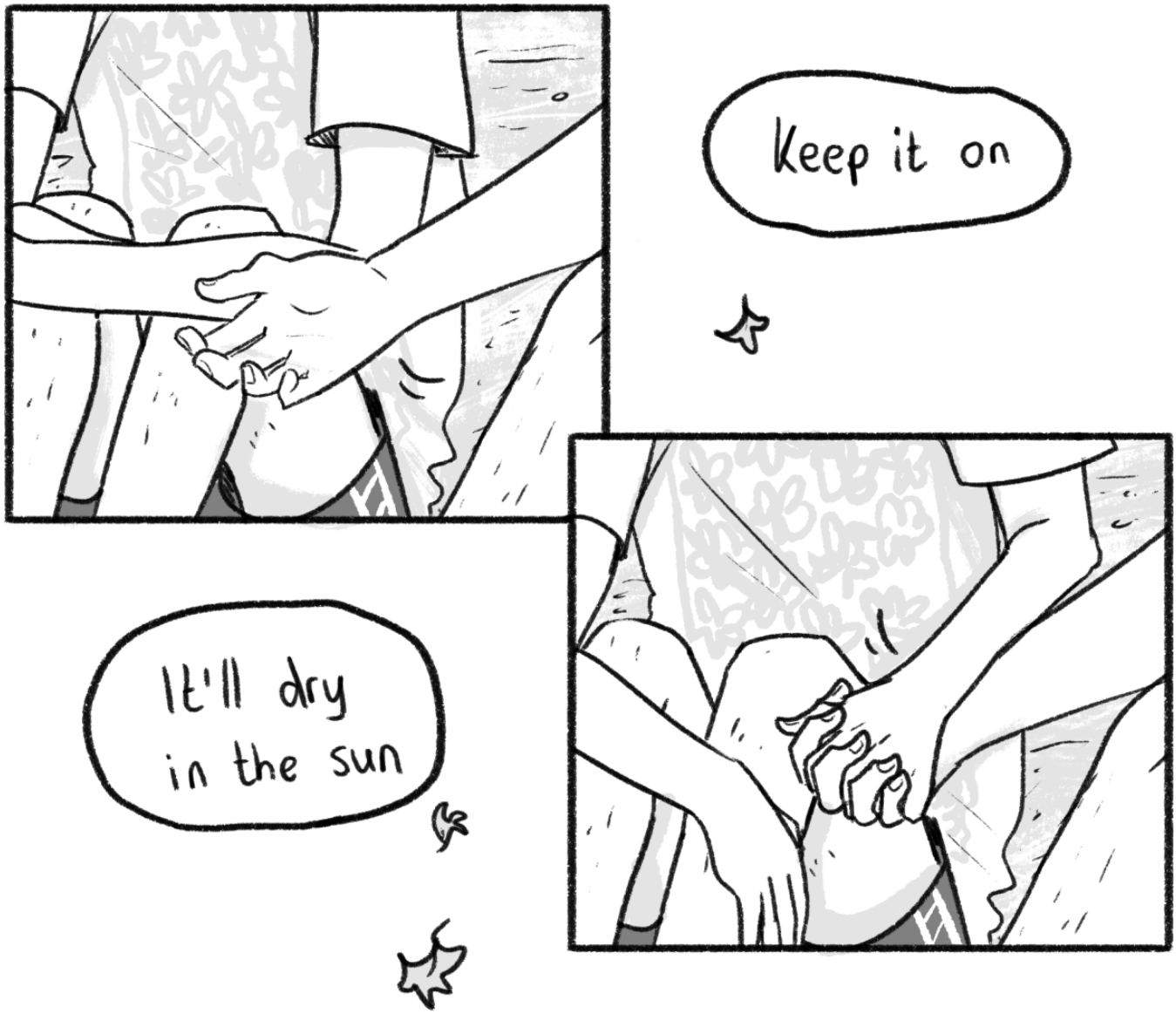
We could just paddle?

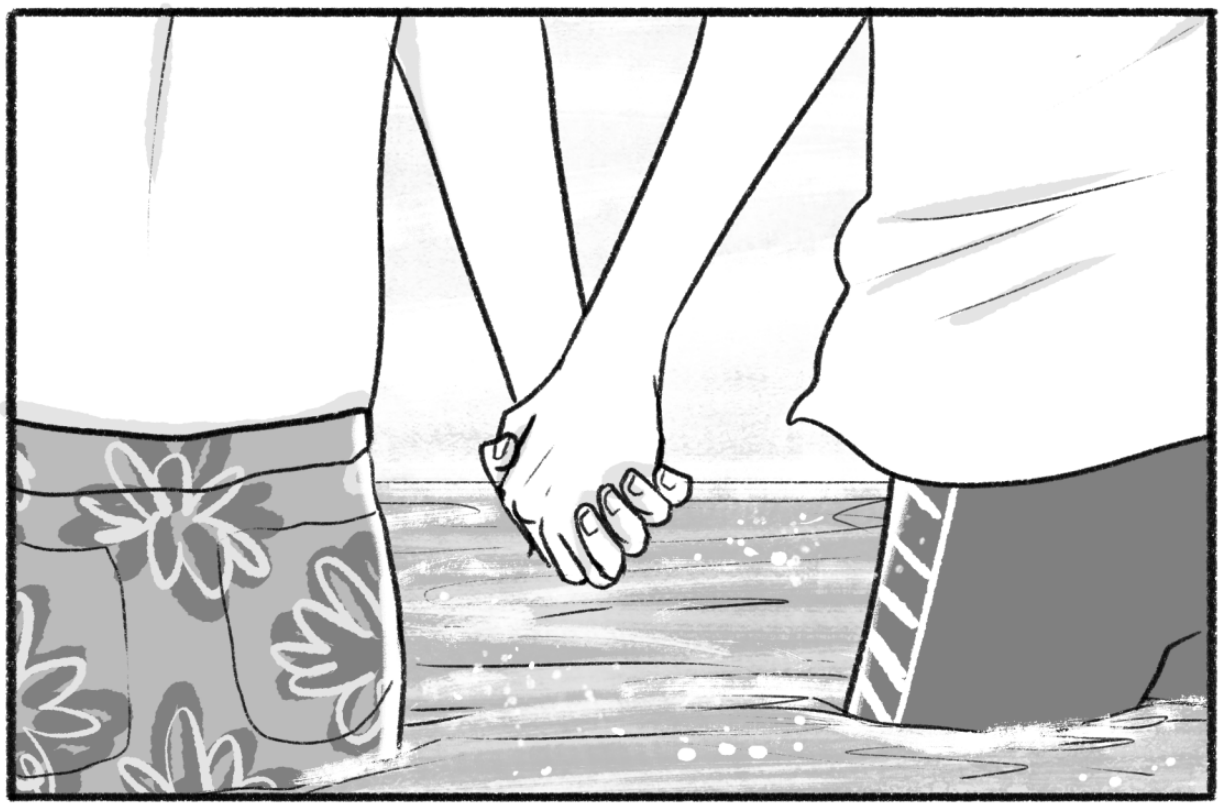
Fine.♡



POKE

Hey
Come in the water with me.
I...
I really...
...don't want to take my shirt off


Keep it on
It'll dry in the sun



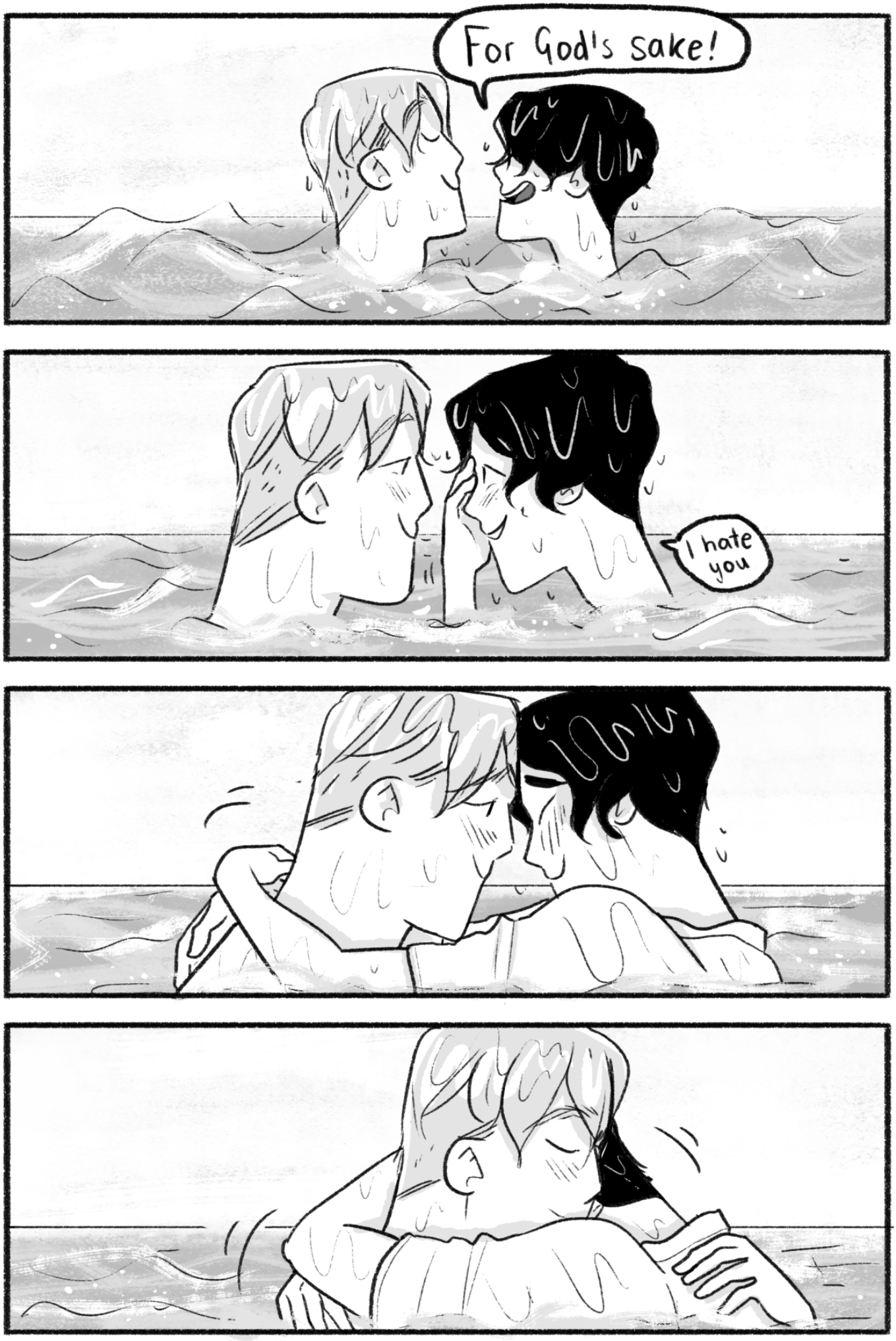
We're so far out already
TOO COLD
HA HA
Okay. That's far enough.
Agreed
We should go under!!
...are you sure?
...no
What if we freeze to death?

I'll take the risk

BUBBLE
PFFT
GASP!

Hey!
I found a shallower bit!
SPLOOSH
HA HA!

?
??
NICK!!!
PULL
SPLASH


For God's sake!
I hate you

"Tell him today"

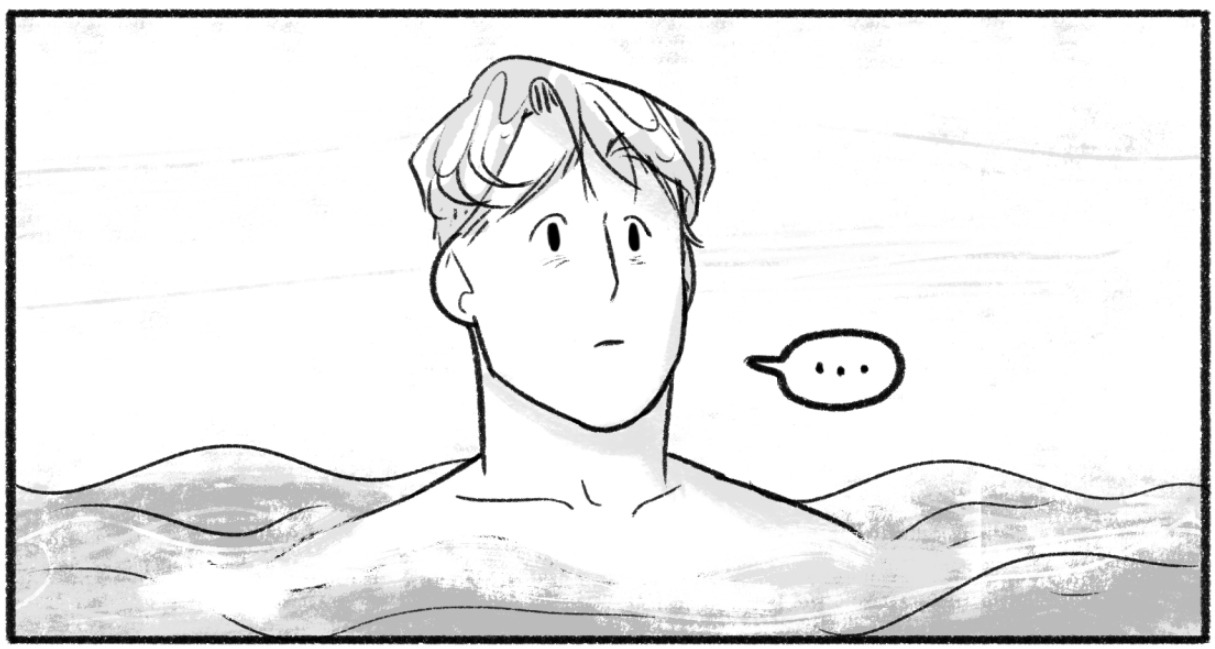
Nick?
I wanted to talk to you about something...
Oh... yeah! Me too!
R-really? Oh- um- you go first!
Okay, well, I...

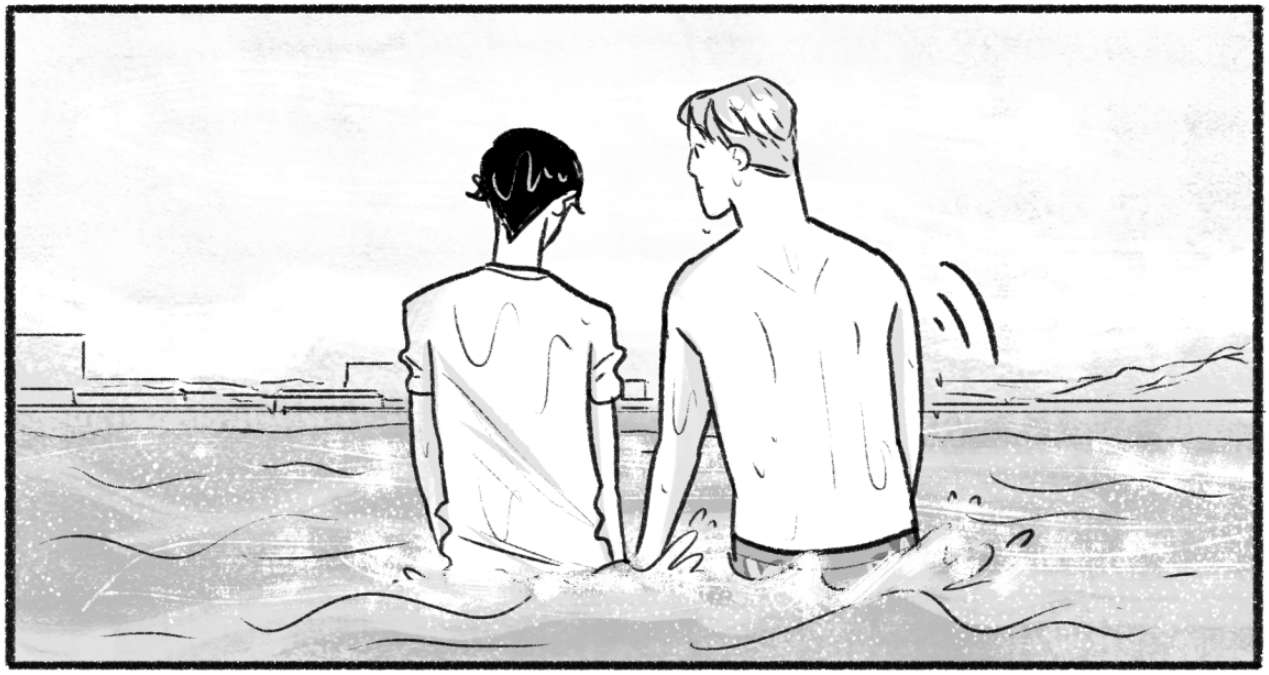
I think you have an eating disorder.
I've been doing some research and I know you don't want me to, like, try to cure you, but I care about you so much and I can see how much worse it's gotten over the past

Are you...
Are you angry at me?
...
No.
No, it's - you're right.
I probably do have an eating disorder

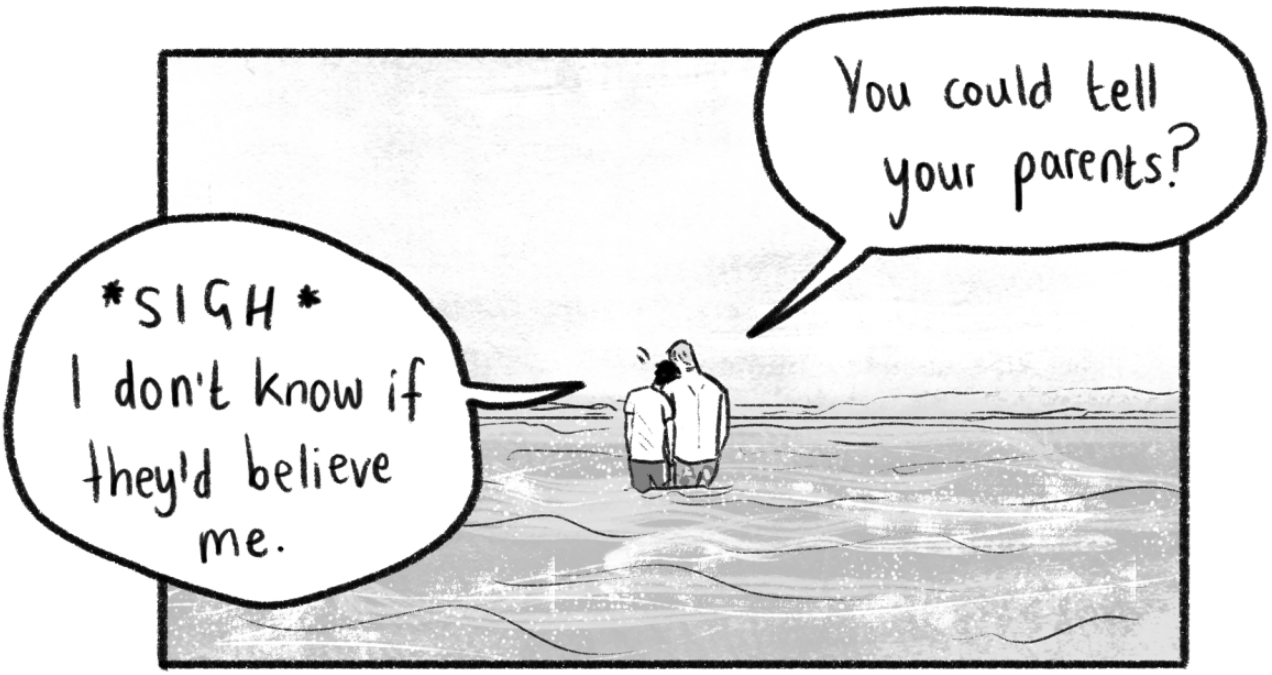
Was that what you wanted to talk about too?
swim

Yeah.


...



What do I do, then?


You could tell your parents?
SIGH I don't know if they'd believe me.

Most people think eating disorders are ... a girl thing.
But they're not! I looked it up!
We can show your parents articles and websites about it!
We can explain and- and then they can help!
Yeah, we can try.

Am I dropping you back at your house, Charlie?
?
?
!!
Can you drop me at Nick's, please?

CRUNCH
TOKY
東
munch
munch
?
ARGH
993
I'm leaving for Menorca in twelve hours and I CAN'T FIND MY GOGGLES!!

I bet David stole them
FLOP
TOKYO
東京都

munch

994

I can't believe you're going away for three whole weeks
nh

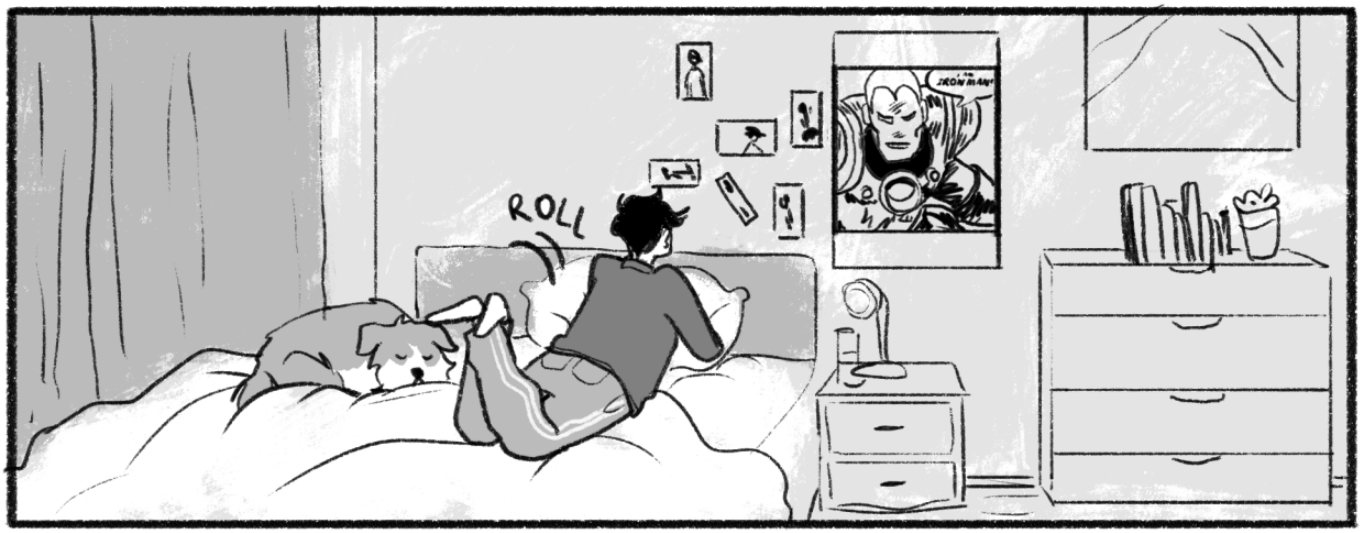
That's the longest time we'll have spent apart since we met...
POKE
What, you gonna miss me?
Maybe a tiny bit.
A tiny bit? Rude.
Fine, a sizeable bit.

SNUGGLE
You know I'm gonna miss you a lot.
KISS
HA HA
Okay, I need to shower. I can still feel sand everywhere.

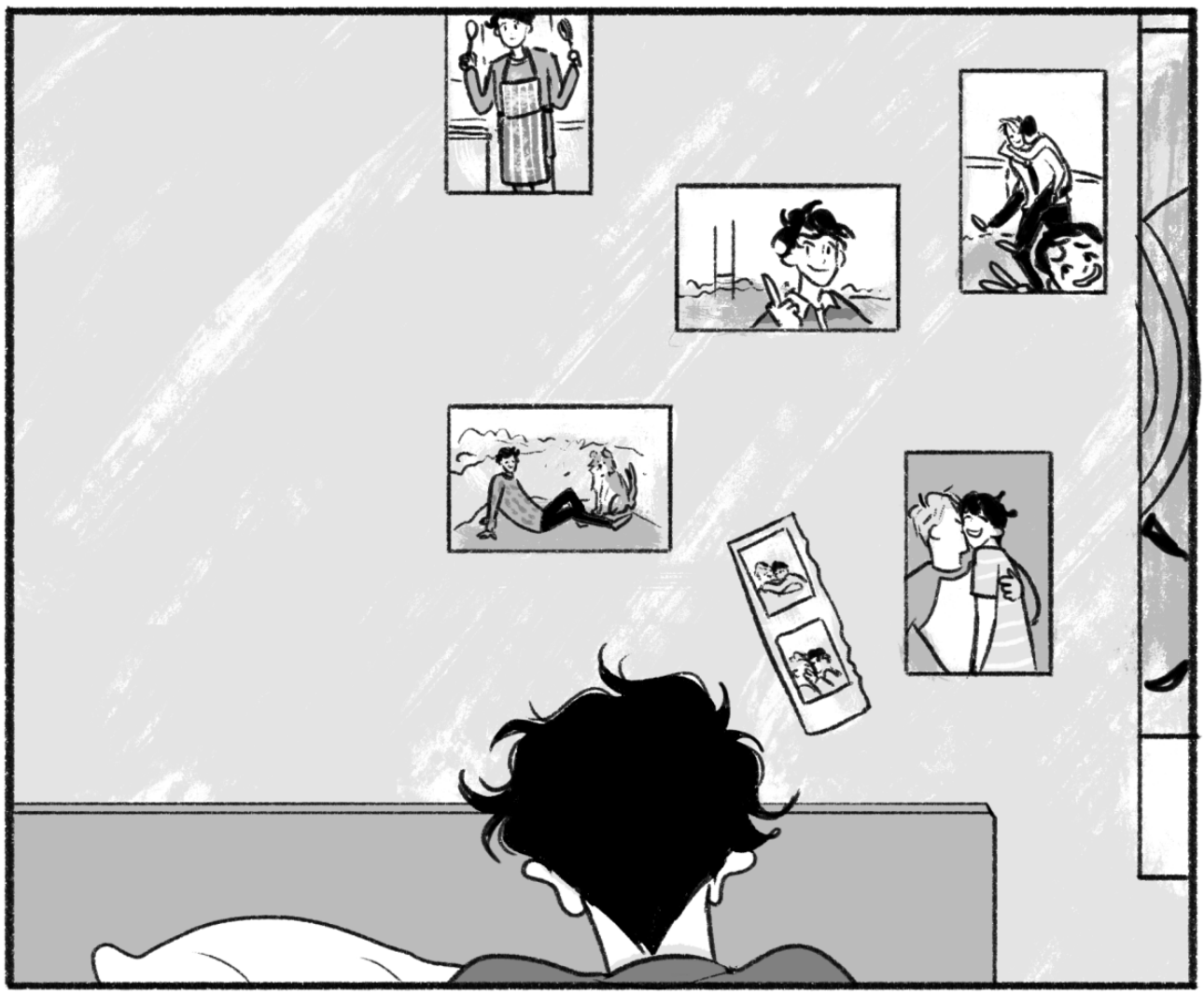
Wanna watch a movie after?
As long as it's not a Marvel film
Oh yeah, I forgot you have no taste.
Hey!

I'll only be ten mins!
SHUT

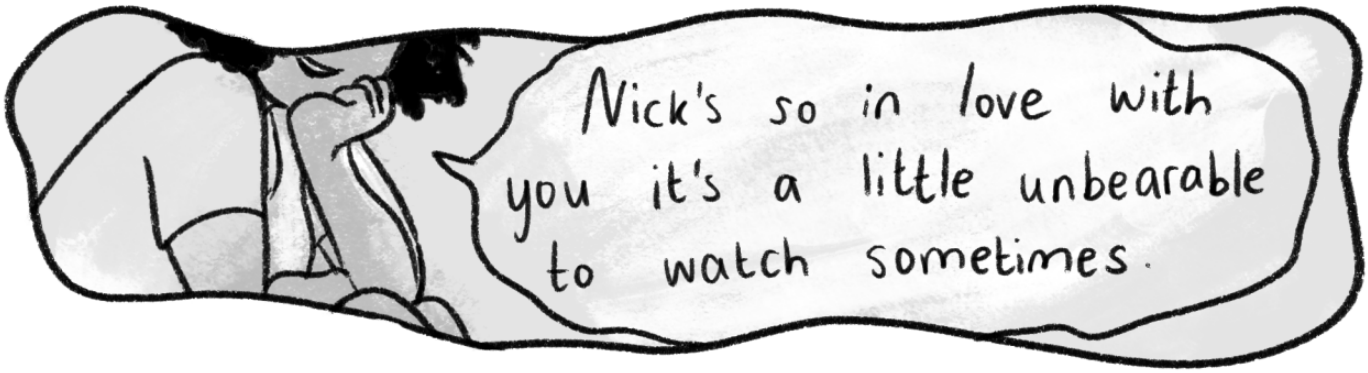
SINK
nom



998



hi
hi
LIFT


Nick's so in love with you it's a little unbearable to watch sometimes.

FFSSSH

DING

UK
47%
21:16
Wednesday 11 August
MESSAGES
now
Mum
Are you on your way home? It's past 9pm.

UK
21:17
47%
Mum
Are you on your way home? It's past 9pm.
TAP
I was gonna watch a movie at Nick's
We agreed 9pm curfew. Come home please.
TAP
TAP
Ugh fine
T
Y
U

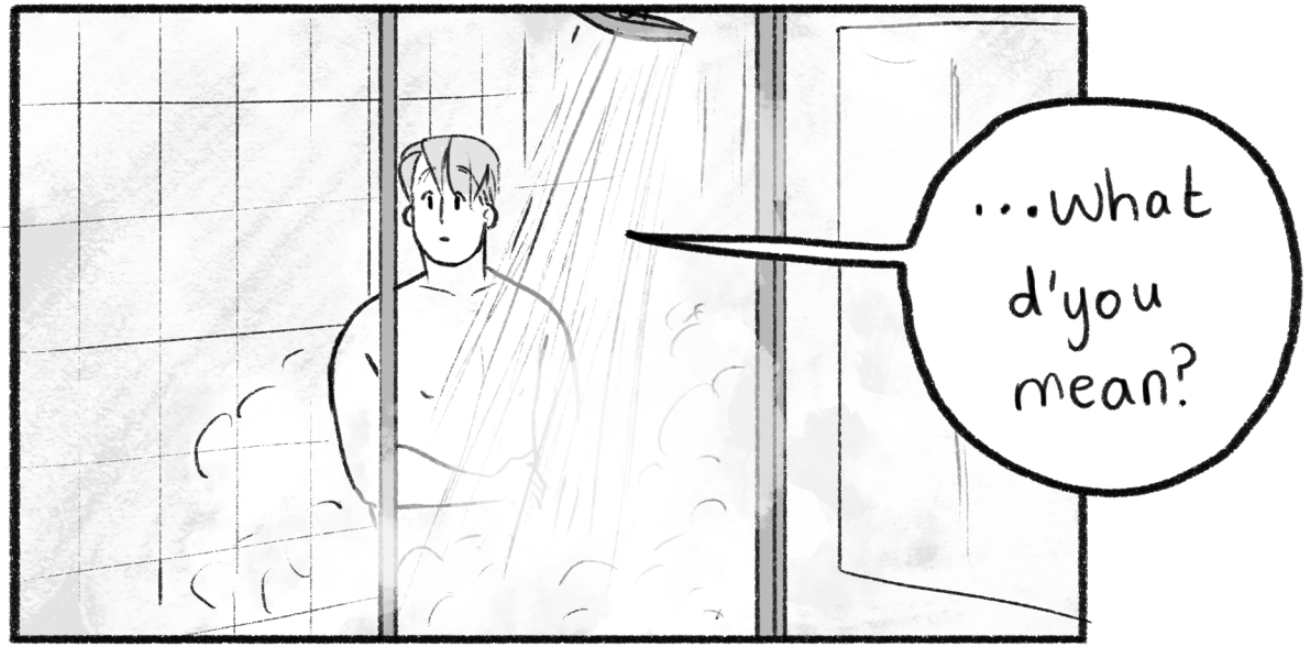
whoosh

FFSSSSHHH
WC
FFSS
WC
SSSSHH
WC
KNOCK
KNOCK

Nick?
FSSSSHH
?
Yeah?
FSSSSHH
Um... my mum said I have to go home

Oh... okay! :"
Hang on, give me two minutes and I'll come walk you home!
SCRUB
SCRUB
No, it's fine, I just-
You know when we were talking in the sea?
Yeah?

...
BOOP
SIT
I
lied.


...what d'you mean?

When you asked me whether the eating thing was what I wanted to talk to you about. That wasn't actually what I was gonna talk to you about.

I was actually gonna say...

I
love
you

. . . . . .
FFFFSSSSHH
. . . . . .
MEN
So... yeah.
Anyway-

Um- bye! I can walk myself home!!
...
WAIT
TUMBLE
Charlie, HANG ON!!

Charlie–
...

. . . .
oh
no
oh no
oh no
oh no
oh no
Clothes.
I need
clothes.

THUNDER
RUMBLE
ZOOM
WHAT are you doing, young man?
WHERE DID CHARLIE GO?
He said he had to go home. Why?

Nicky!! You could at least put some shoes on!
SWING

Idiot
idiot
idiot

I'm such an idiot
RUB
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT
TURN
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT

CHARLIE!!
huff huff
huff
PAT
PAT
PAT
PAT
y-yes?
TOKYO
oh
GRAB

huff
huff

huff
huff
h-hi

huff
huff
huff

Um... you are not wearing many clothes
huff
huff
huff
TOKYO
東京都

You said it to me while I was IN THE SHOWER.
...sorr-
And don't you dare say sorry
...okay

Say it again?

Can you say what you said ...again?

It's embarrassing
Want me to say it first, then?
1022
Uh, I definitely said it first, I'm not letting you have this one!!
HA HA HA!

I love you
And you don't have to say it back! I just wanted you to know because I'm not gonna see you for weeks and-

I love you too
I love you so much
1024

You're not just saying it because I said it-
Charlie!!

Ha ha ha
Come here you idiot

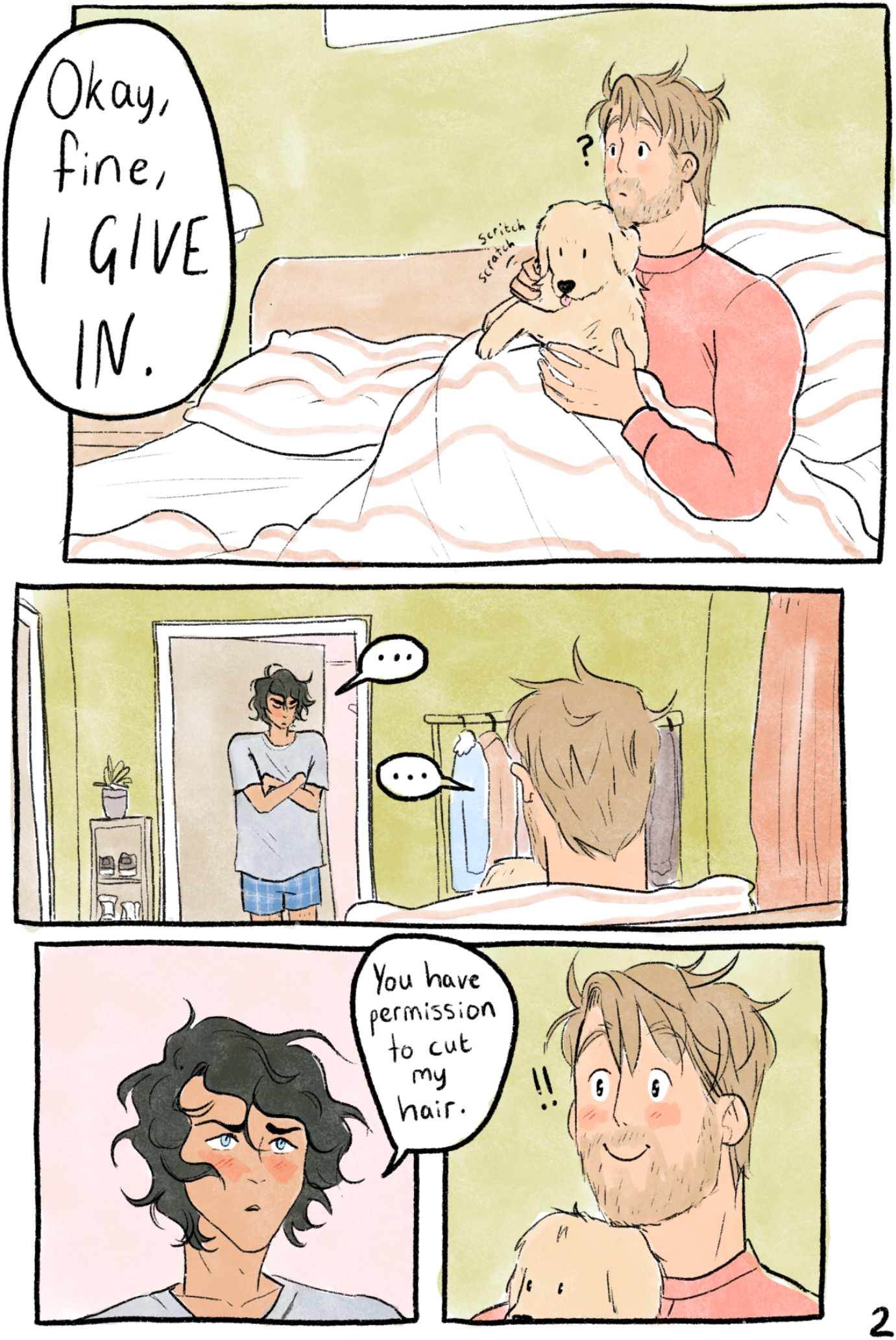
You're still damp!
Yeah, well, you said 'I love you' for the first time while I was IN THE SHOWER.
Oh my God, why did I do that?
Why are we like this?
1026
Because you're Charlie.
And you love me.
And I love you.

So can I walk you home now?
You're literally not wearing a shirt.
TOK
I thought you liked it. I saw you peeping at the beach.
I- I was not PEEPING.
It's okay, it's allowed. We're in love.
Oh my God, shut up
Also I need my jumper back.
Oh :
Charlie, you have like five of my jumpers already.
...Maybe so.

THE HAIRCUT

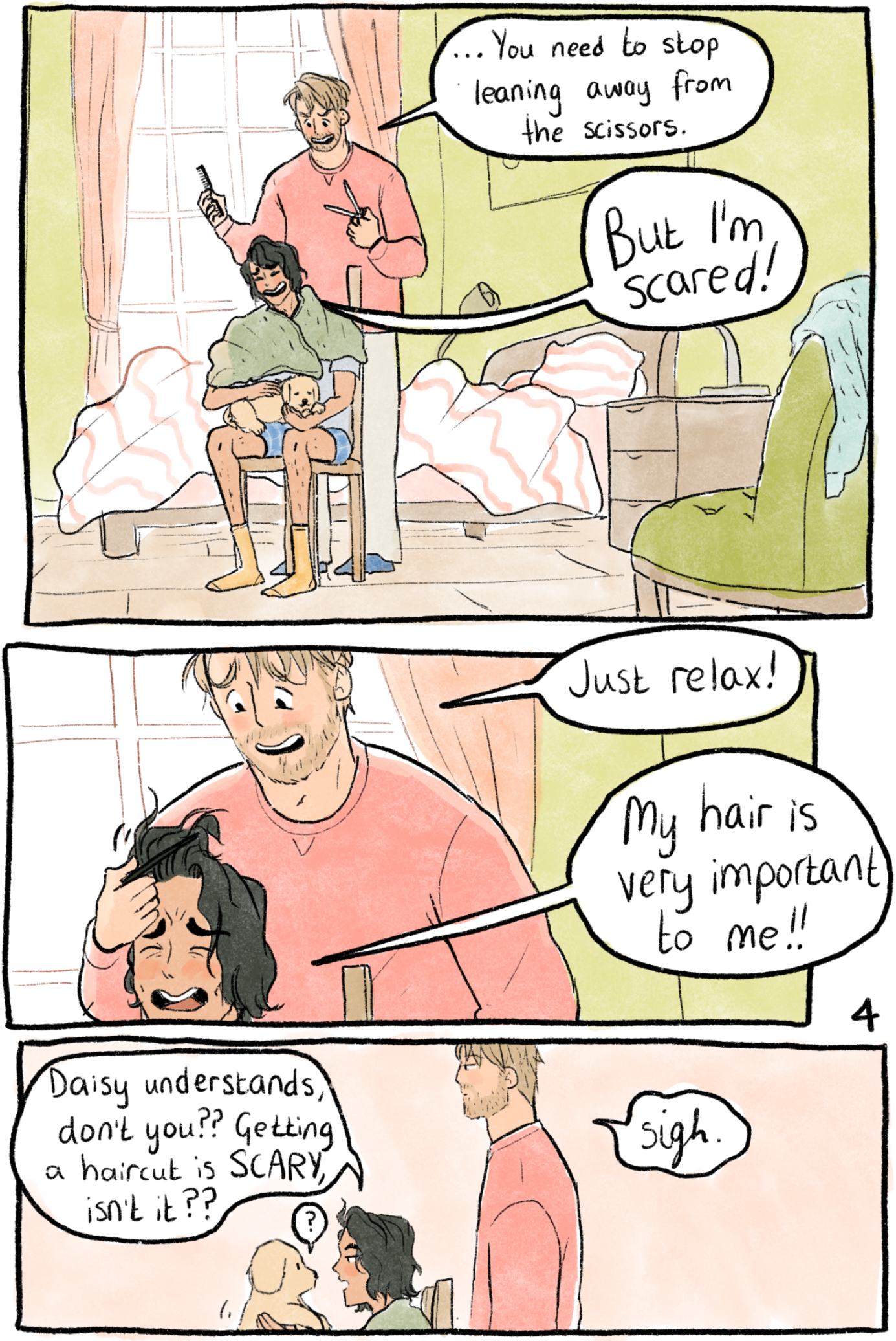
A HEARTSTOPPER MINI-COMIC

one day in Nick & Charlie's future...


Okay, fine, I GIVE IN.
?
Scritch scratch
...
...
You have permission to cut my hair.
!!

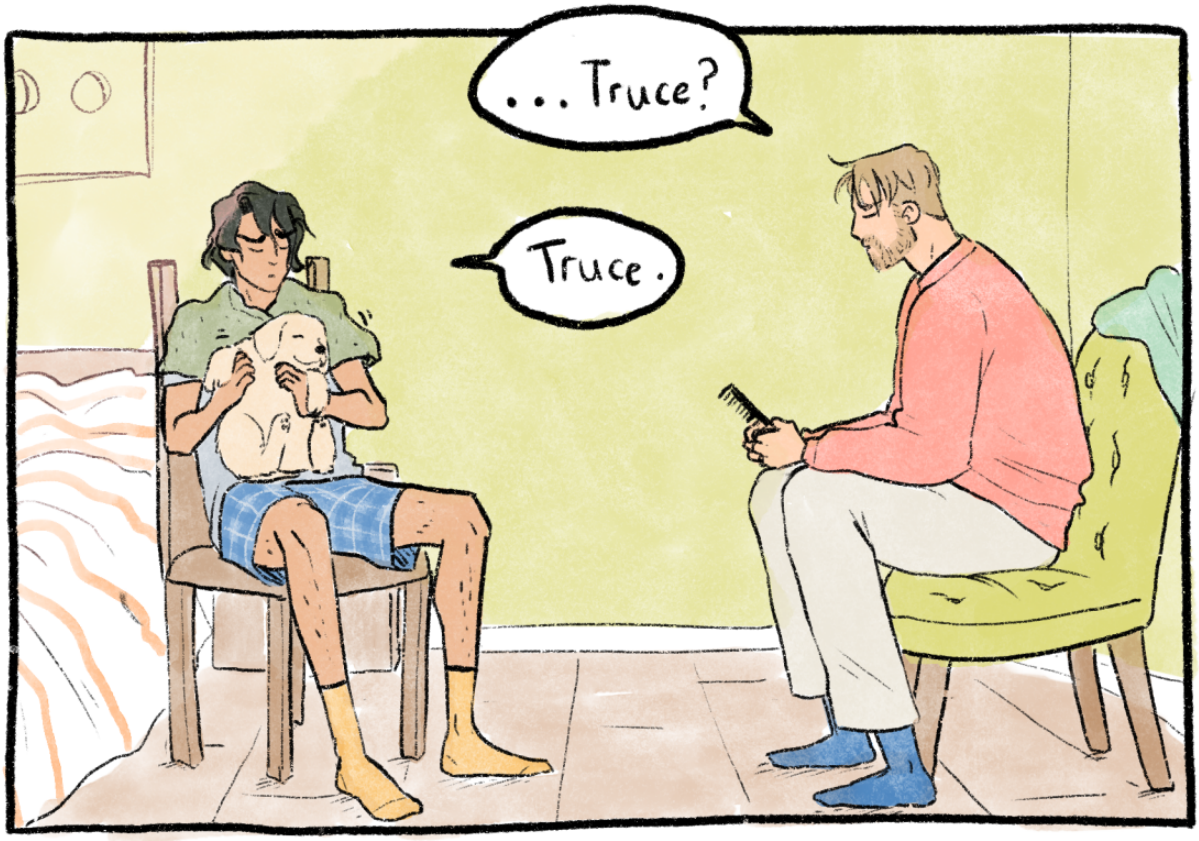
You won't regret this.
We'll see about that.
Come on, then.
LIFT
Ah!! Now??
Yep.

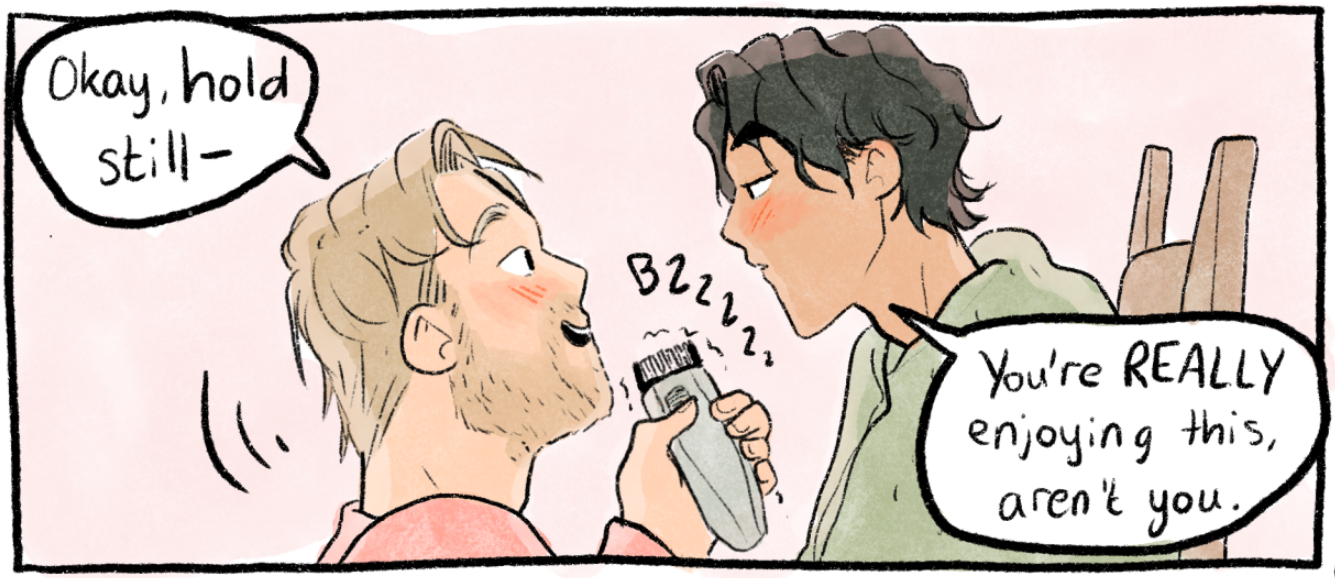
LEAN


...You need to stop leaning away from the scissors.
But I'm scared!
Just relax!
My hair is very important to me!!
4
Daisy understands, don't you?? Getting a haircut is SCARY, isn't it??
?
sigh.

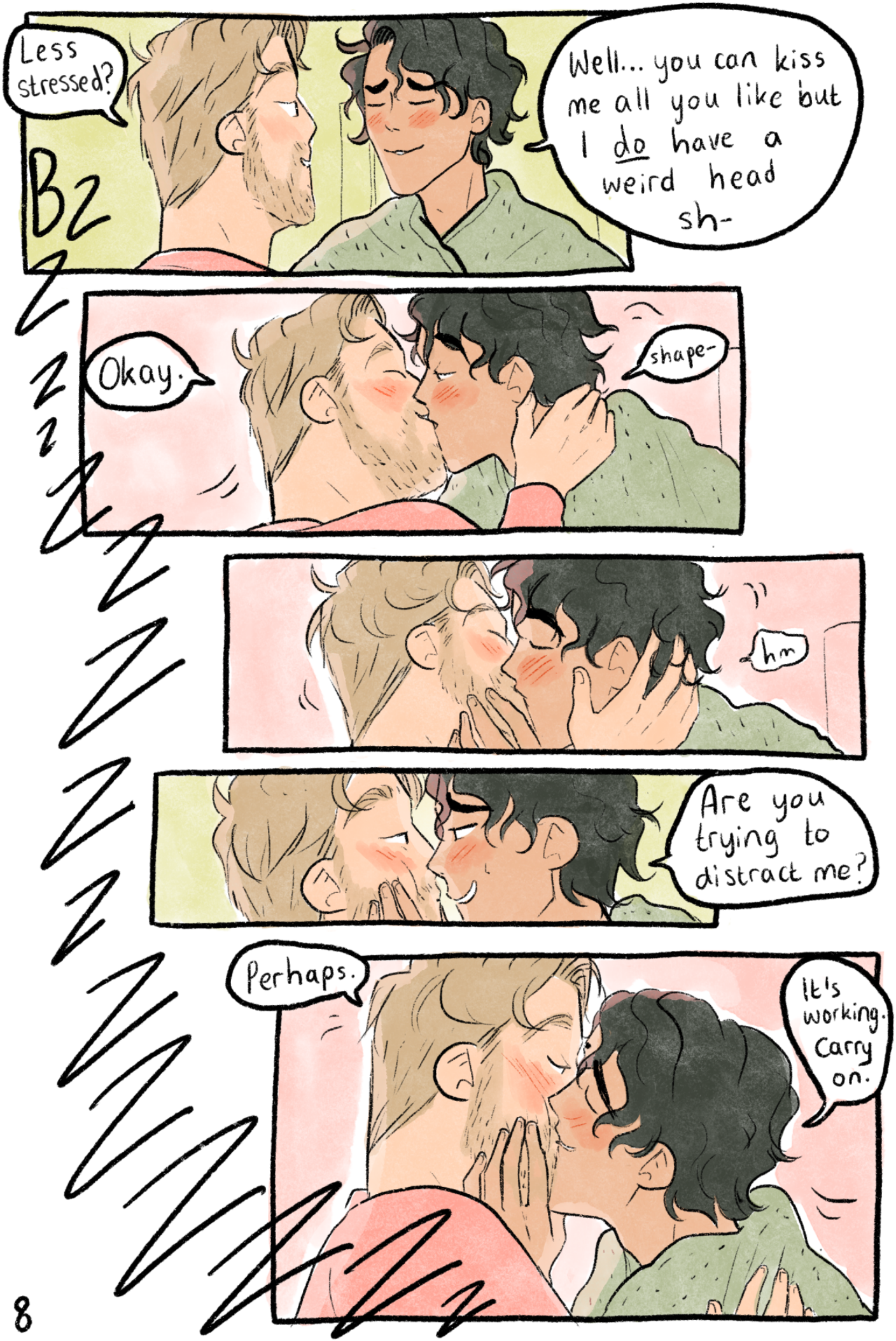
SNIP
How much did you just cut off!?!
You said you wanted it short at the sides!!
Yes but I don't want to be BALD.
You're not bald!!
I will be if you keep this up!!

Many minutes of squabbling later...

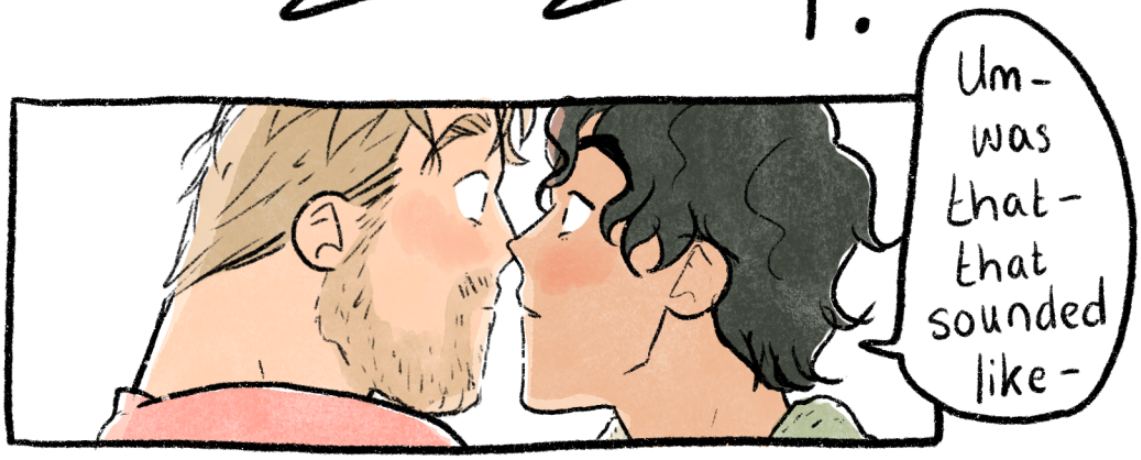


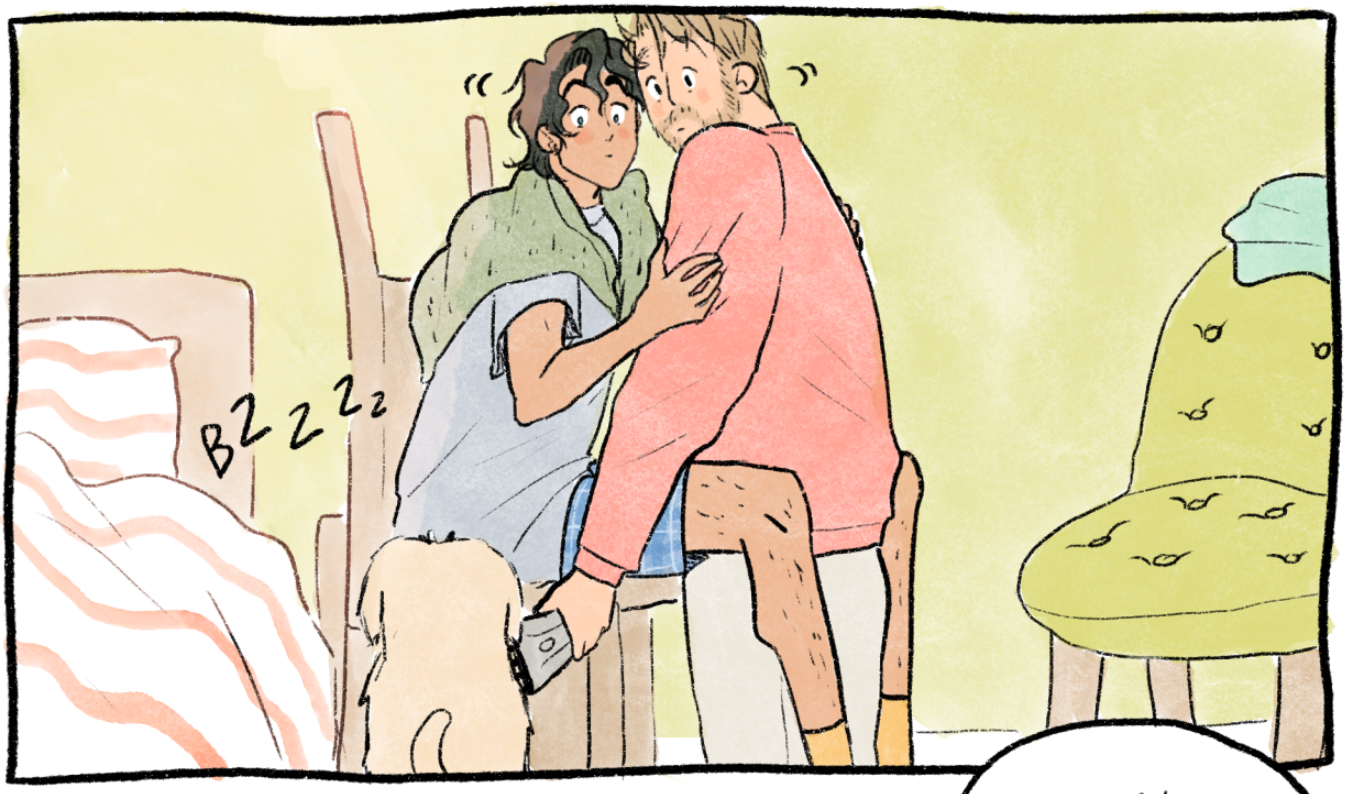


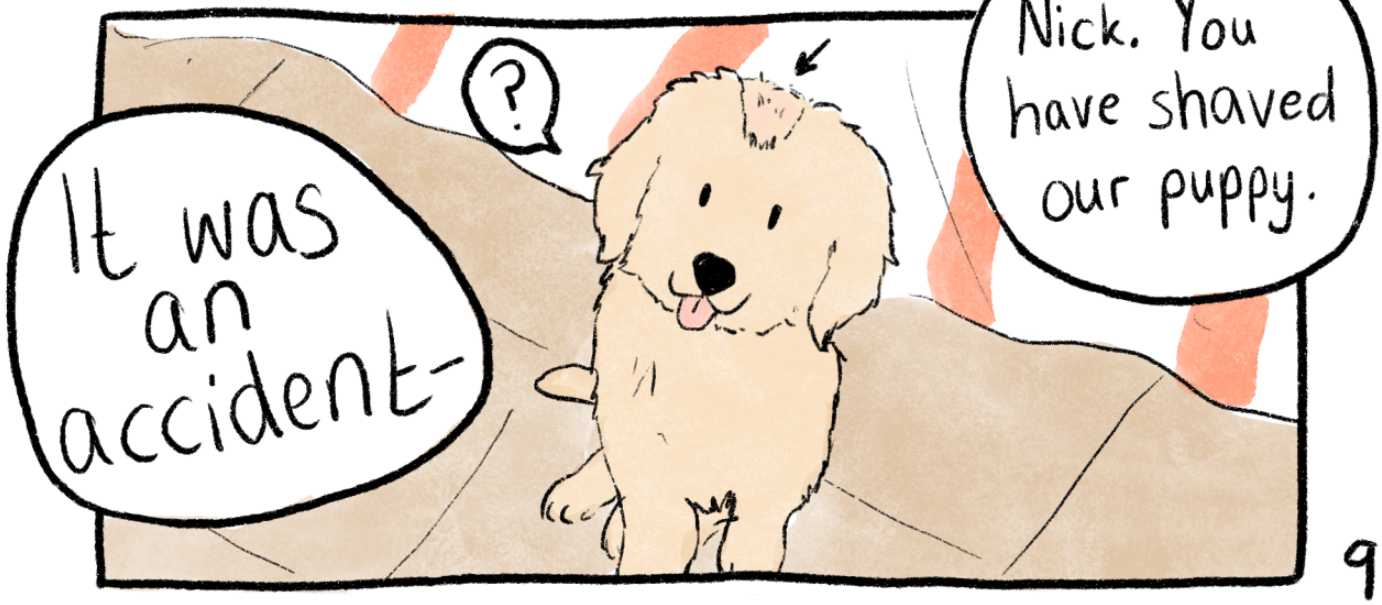
BZZZZ
Have you got it on the right setting?
Yes.
Don't do it too high up.
I know.
I have a weird-shaped skull.
Okay.
Nick-
?
Charlie. If I kiss you, will you be quiet?
...perhaps
PECK


B2
Less stressed?
Well... you can kiss me all you like but I do have a weird head sh-
Okay.
shape-
hm
Are you trying to distract me?
Perhaps.
It's working. Carry on.

ZZZZT.


Um- was that- that sounded like-

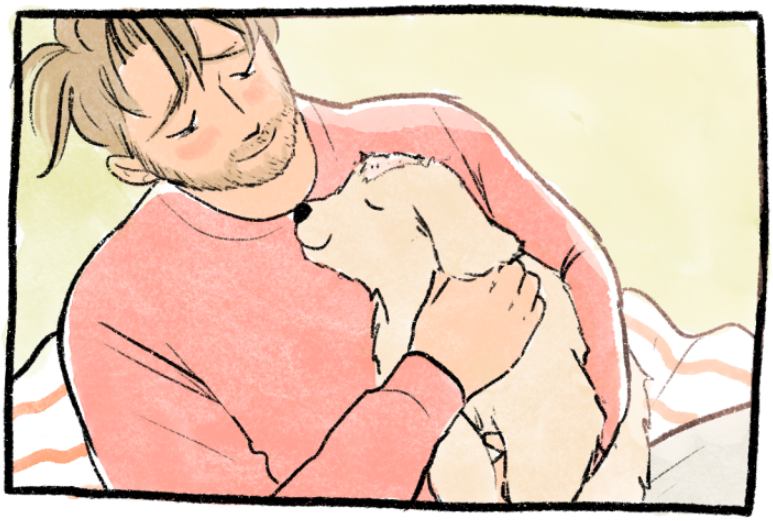

BZZZz


Nick. You have shaved our puppy.
?
It was an accident-

Look who finally gave in and let me cut his hair

Omg that actually looks good

We did have one casualty though



LMAOOOOO

oh my GOD

Nick's new career - dog stylist?

I have confiscated the razor

The end

Charlie.

You're late.
Go on. We'll talk about this tomorrow.
Okay!
Well? Did you tell him?
?

Since when were you getting a haircut?
Answer the question, Charles.
...
Yeah. I told him.

So it was a good day, then?
BRIDESHEAD REVISITED
EVELYN WAUGH
Yeah, it was -
Me and Nick, we - we talked about -

...
Um... yeah.
It was good.

hi

i love you

a lot

HI I love you too

I LOVE YOU!!! I like saying it

I miss you so much already

are you even at the airport yet lol

....no

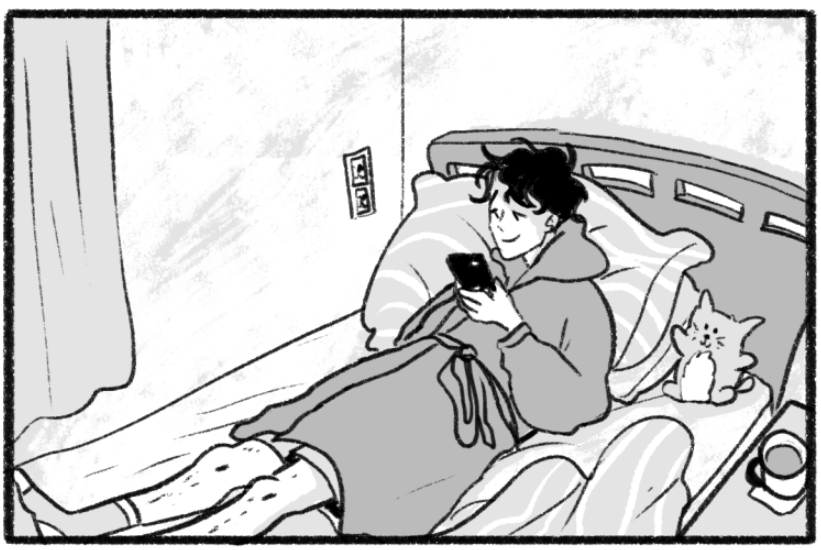
My little cousins say hi!!!

omg

can i come to menorca with you pls

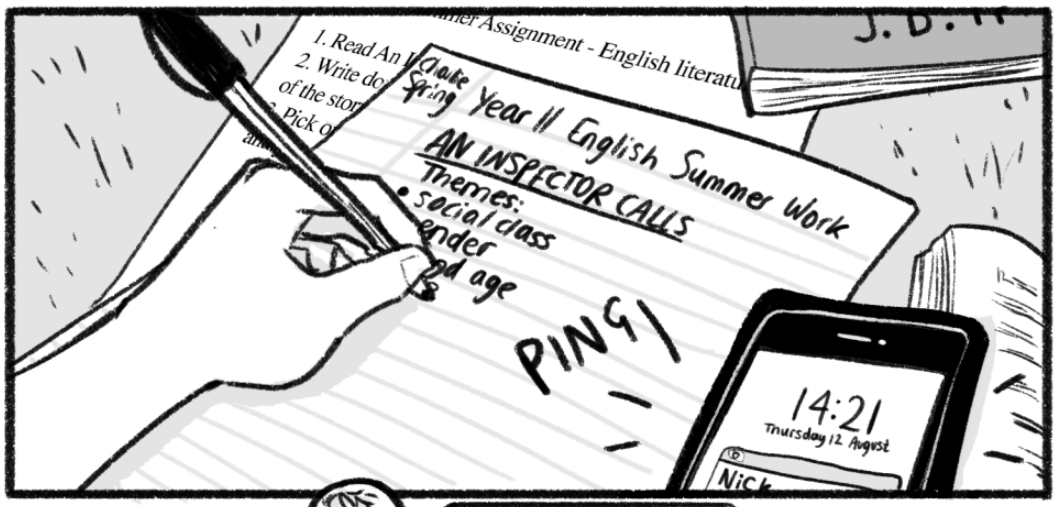
Plane leaves in 90 mins!

Can you run that fast??



i could try

i could fit in your suitcase



We've landed!!

come back 😂

😂

Are you gonna talk to your parents about the eating thing?

i'll try xx

♡♡♡♡

♡♡♡♡♡♡♡♡

UK
59%
17:32
Thursday 12 August
17:32
NICK
have you arrived yet?
send me a pic of the villa!!!
TAP
TAP
TAP
did your phone run out of charge haha
DELETE
Charlie. I told you to tidy up in here.
Yep, give me a minute!

Now, please!
BZZ
BZZ
Nick
Mobile
Decline
Accept
BZZ²

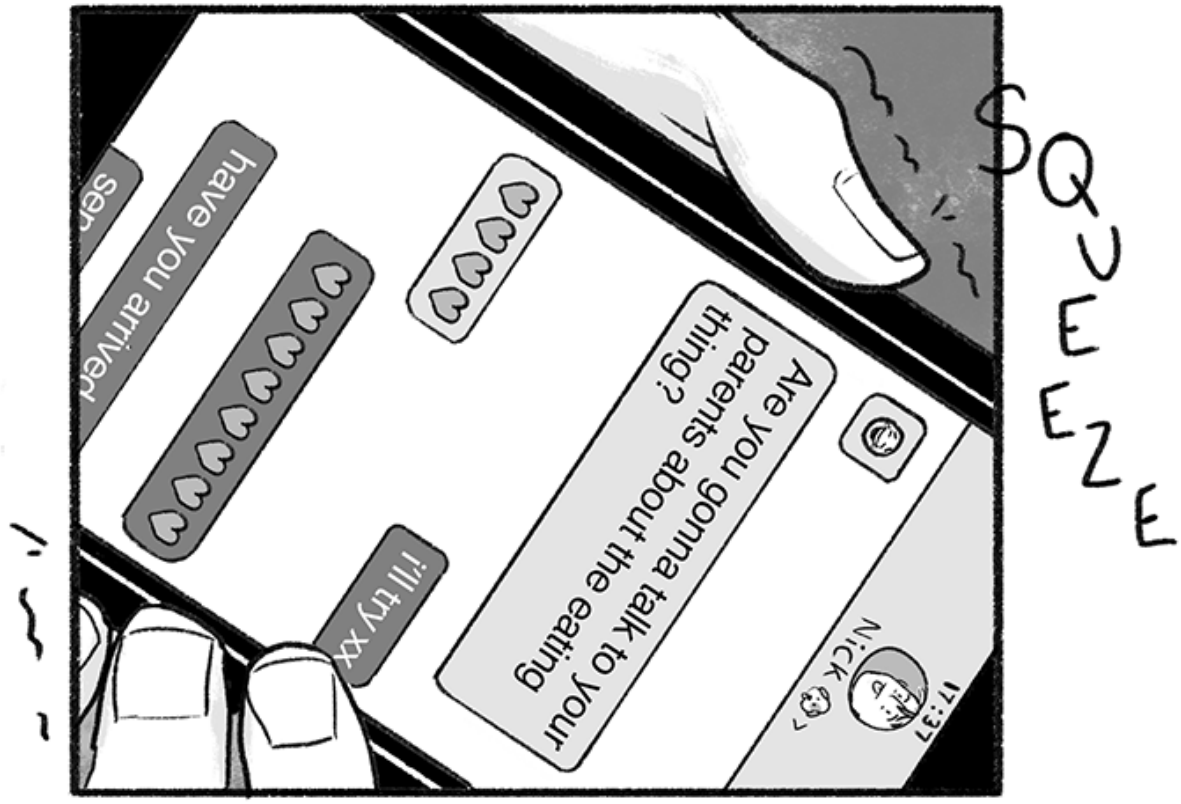
Nick?
Charlie!! Hi!
I'm so sorry, there's no phone signal or wifi at our villa, I had to walk into town.
Ch---- so--- phone---- ---w--- ---the---
Nick---- ~can't--- bad signal--- ---

Charlie! You're not tidying!
Hang on, I'm talking to Nick!
STAND
Charlie! You're all crackly!
Put the phone down.
Charlie? Are you there?

CLICK
boop
boop
boop
Nick
Call failed
boop
You know what? We needed to have a talk about Nick anyway.
You shouldn't be staying late around his house.
You're too young to be having sex.
What-
We're- We're not-

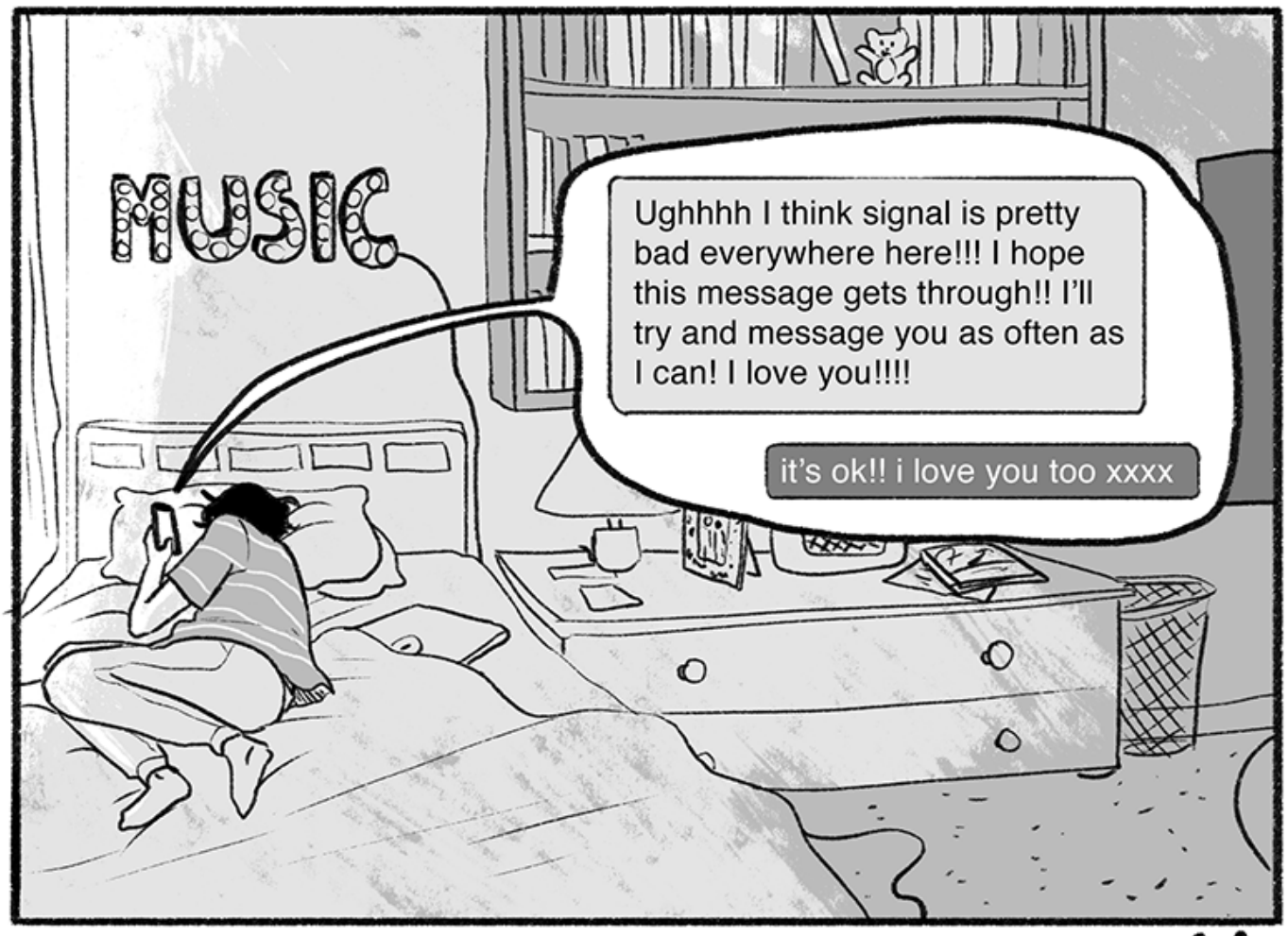
I'm not stupid, Charlie. You came home yesterday wearing his clothes.
But-
And you shouldn't be hanging out with him every day. You have summer work. You're about to go into your GCSE year-
What, so I'm not allowed to have a boyfriend now?
Don't twist my words, Charlie Spring.
I'm just making sure you don't mess up the other parts of your life while you're obsessed with a school romance!
It's not just a school romance! I love him!!!
DAD

Jane. Come on, you're being too harsh.
He can't run his whole life around his boyfriend!
I'm just trying to look out for him!


SQUEEZE
17:37
NICK
Are you gonna talk to your parents about the eating thing?
i'll try xx
have you arrived
ser

JUST-
LEAVE ME ALONE!!!
STOMP
STOMP
SLAM

Julio, you can't just undermine me like that in front of him.
But you know you were being too harsh.
I just... always say the wrong thing to him.

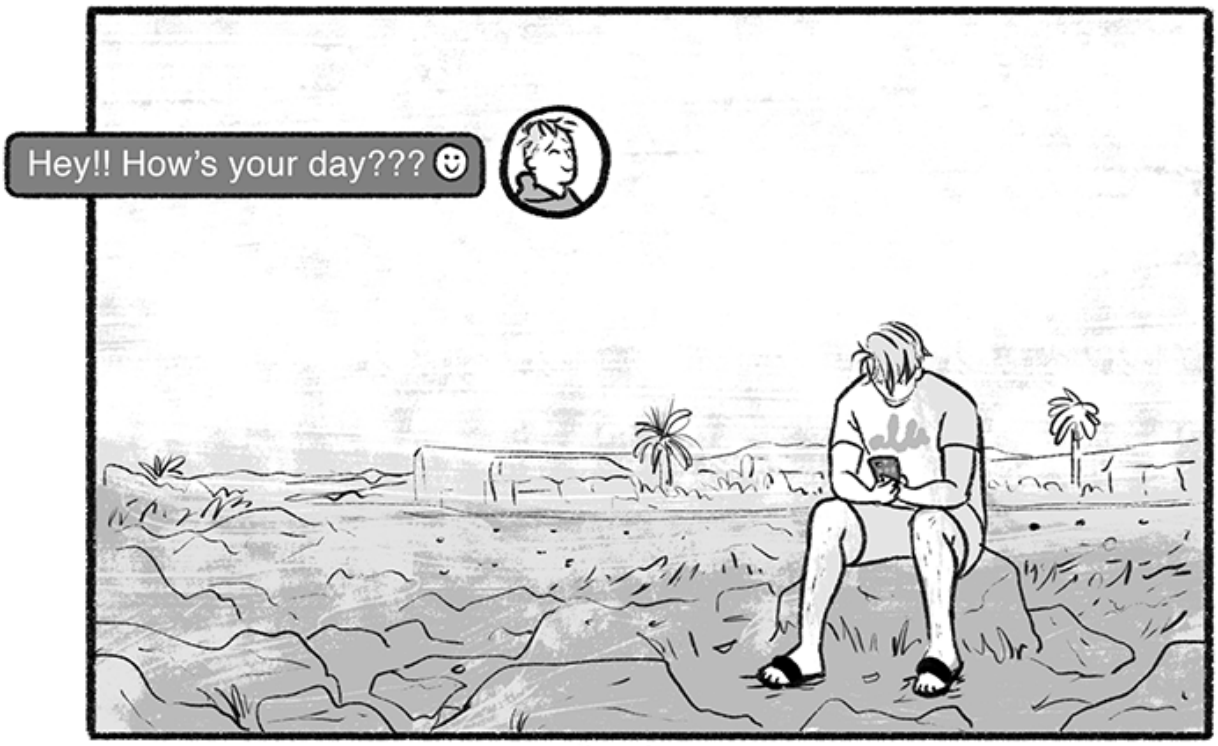

MUSIC
Ughhhh I think signal is pretty bad everywhere here!!! I hope this message gets through!! I'll try and message you as often as I can! I love you!!!!
it's ok!! i love you too xxxx

The first week.

Nick, why didn't Nellie come?
Nellie doesn't like planes! She's staying with Gramps and Grandma.
You'll have to bring your boyfriend next year, Nick!
Yeah! I'd like that!
Ttch.
Lame.
Er, don't be mean, David.

Charlie!!!! Reply to the group chat hahaha
BRIDESHEAD REVISITED
EVELYN WAUGH
sorry i was busy lol
Are you coming to the cinema next week or not???
yeah!
How come you're so bad at replying to messages 😂

The second week.



SCREEN 6
SCREEN 7
SCREEN 3
Hey

You've barely said a word tonight...
You okay?
Just missing Nick, or...
Is there something else?

Shoelace's undone
SCREEN 4

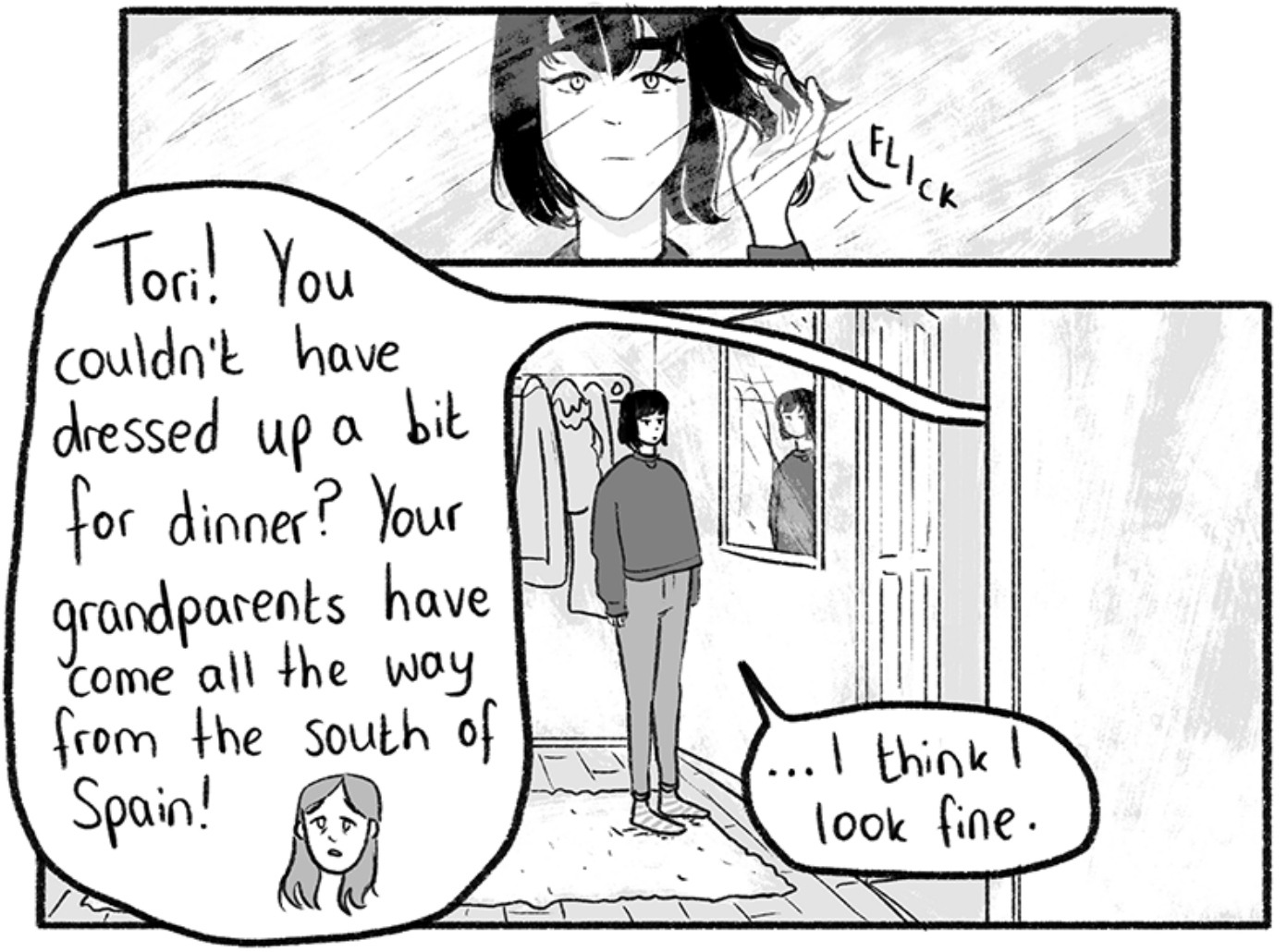
it was fine! went to the cinema with the gang☺ how about you?

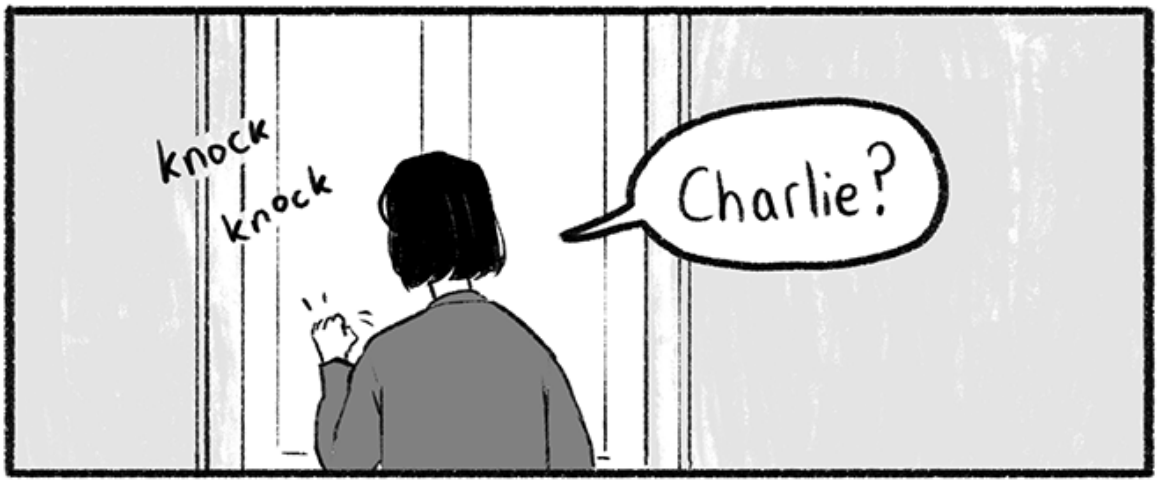
SMACK

CLATTER
What the f-
David!
What? We're on holiday! Get off your phone!
Just fuck off.
Oooooh don't throw a strop!
You've been on your phone to your little boyfriend non-stop.
Didn't know you gays were so co-dependent!

And you haven't even told Dad about him.
That's gonna be awkward on your birthday.
...
GRAB
haha night!! xxx
Today
Hey!! How's your day???
It was fine! went to the cinema with the gang how about you?

The third week.





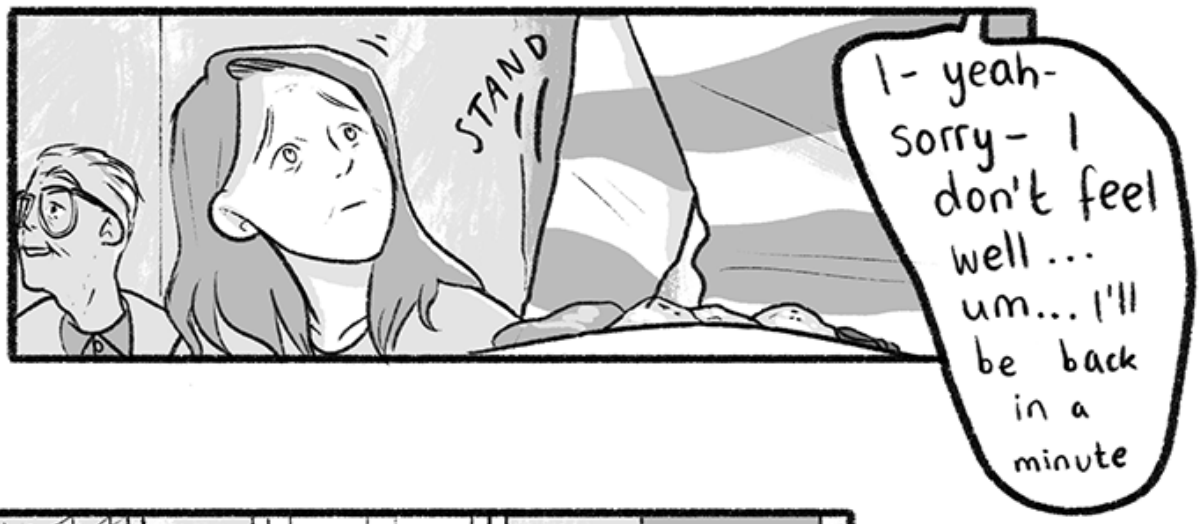
Hey, I think the grandparents will be here soon.
Okay
Dad's cooked a roast so prepare for an absolutely flavourless meal.
Okay
...
What?
Are you o-
What was that about my cooking skills?

Nothing. We'll be down in a sec, Dad.
Hmmph.
Can you believe it's our last night in Menorca already? These three weeks have flown by!
I'm sort of missing good old English weather!

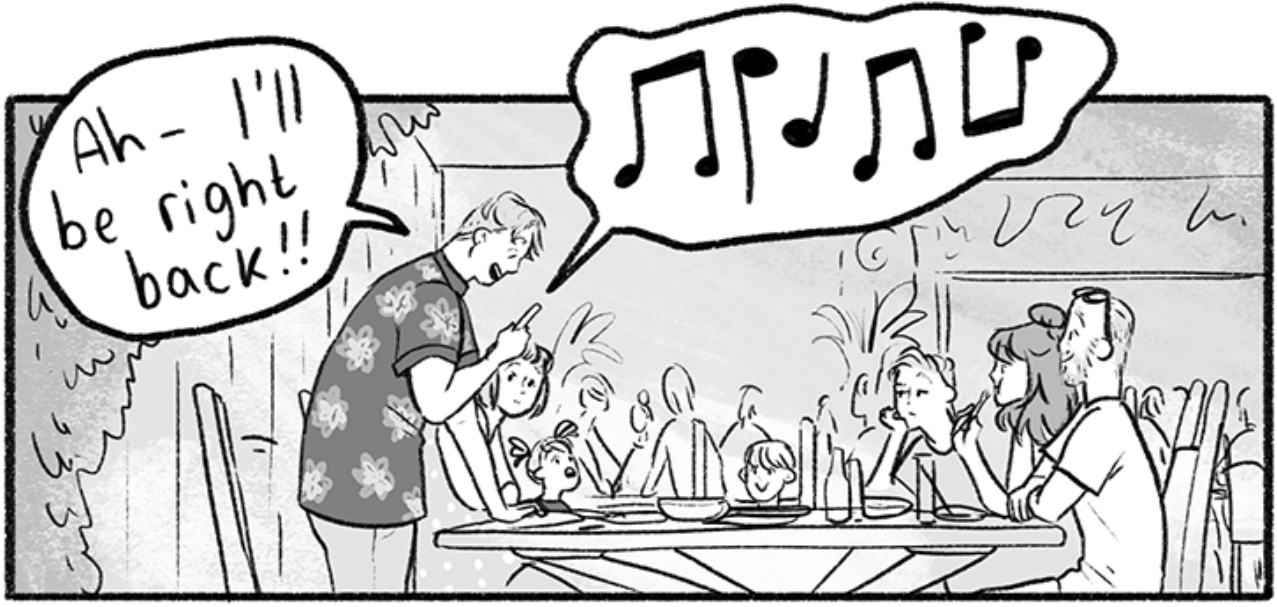
CONTENT WARNING: Eating disorders

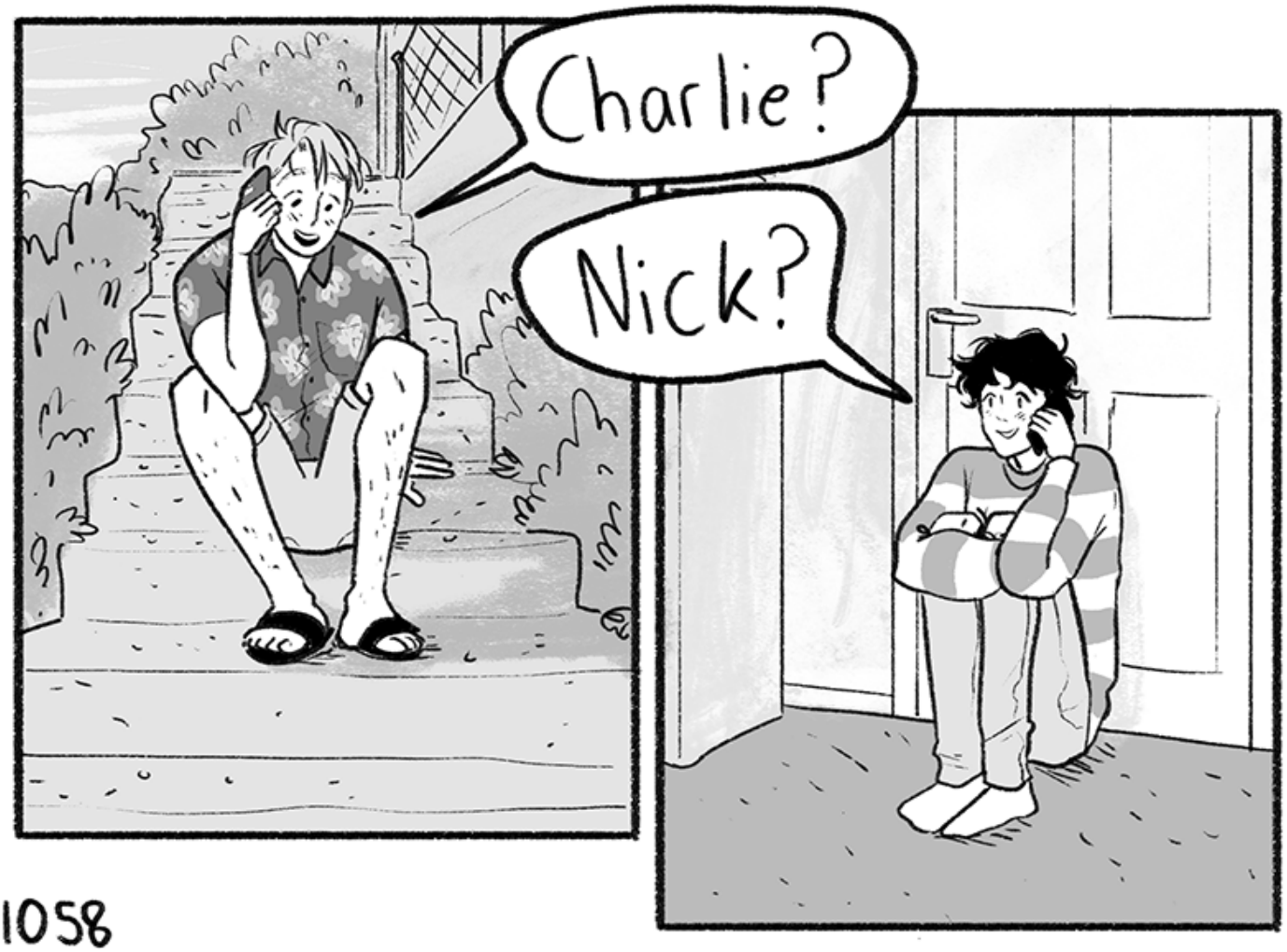
1056

Is something wrong, Charlie?


STAND
I- yeah- sorry- I don't feel well... um... I'll be back in a minute

Nick Nelson
message

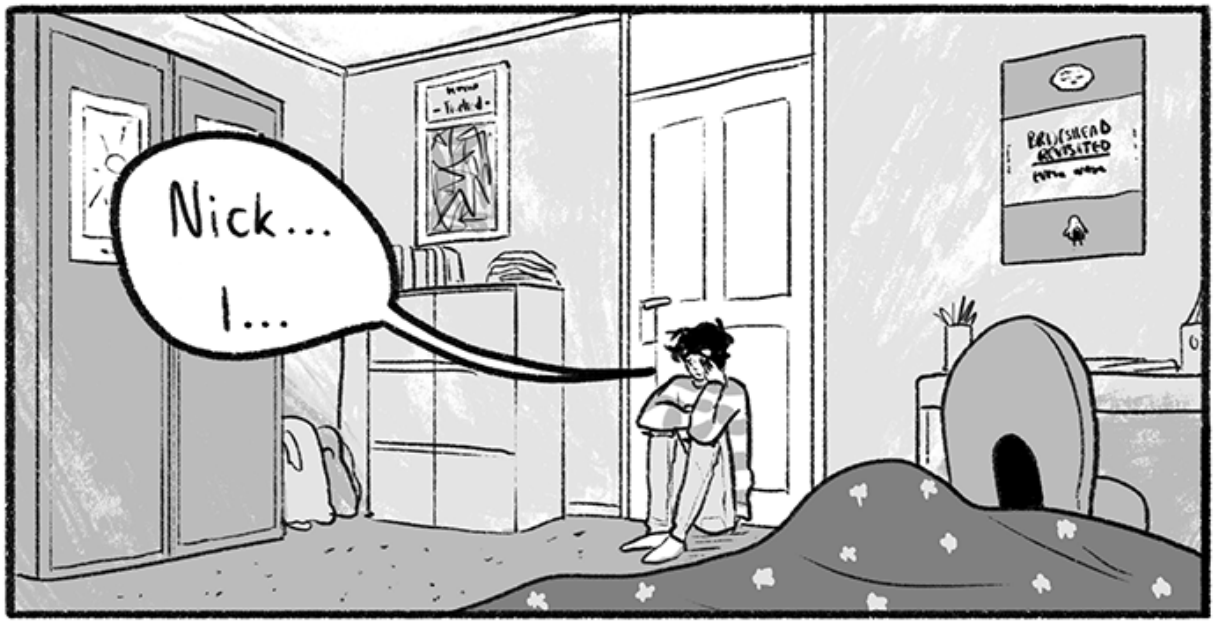

Ah- I'll be right back!!


Charlie?
Nick?

Can you hear me? We're at a restaurant in town, but-
Yes! Yeah, I can hear you!
Thank GOD. I've missed you so much.
I miss you too!! Tell me about your holiday!
Who's he talking to?
Probably his clingy little boyfriend.

Be quiet, David.
I've had enough of your snidey little comments this holiday.
If you're going to be nasty, you can stay home next year.
huff

So... is everything else okay? You know... with the eating thing.


Nick...
I...

I can't tell my parents about it.

Wh- Why not?

...

I just... can't tell them stuff.
My mum isn't like your mum. We don't- we don't talk about things. Emotional things.
She just gets angry at me.

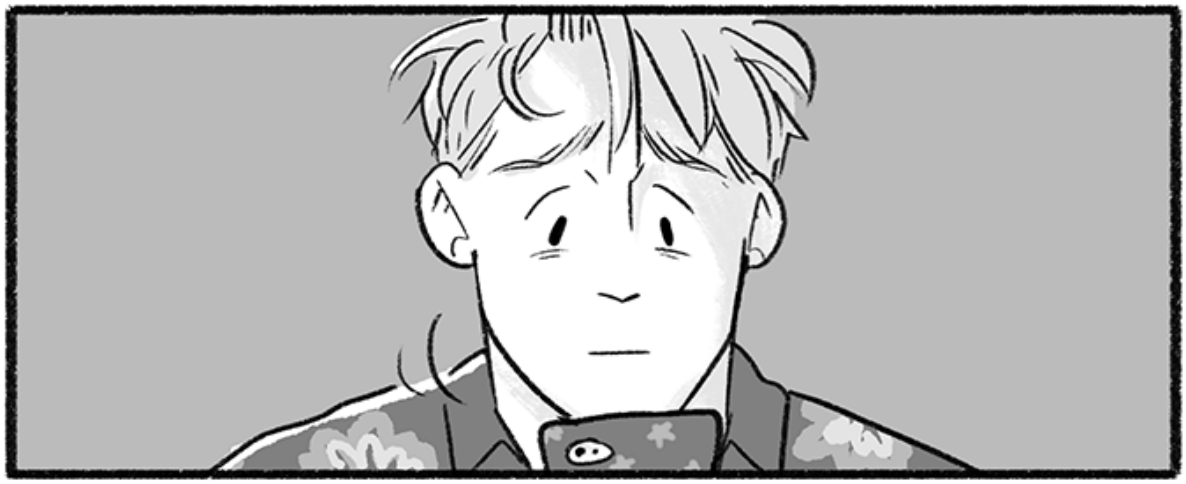
But...

Charlie, I...

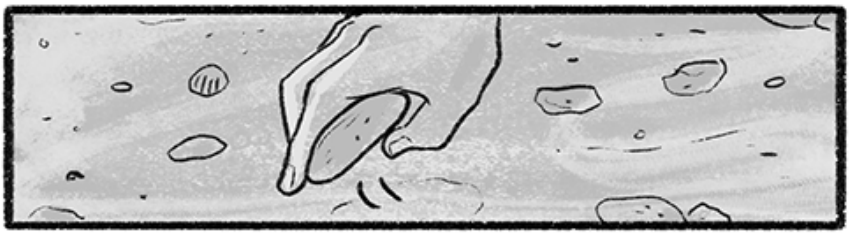
I...
don't know what to do
...
KNOCK KNOCK
Charlie?

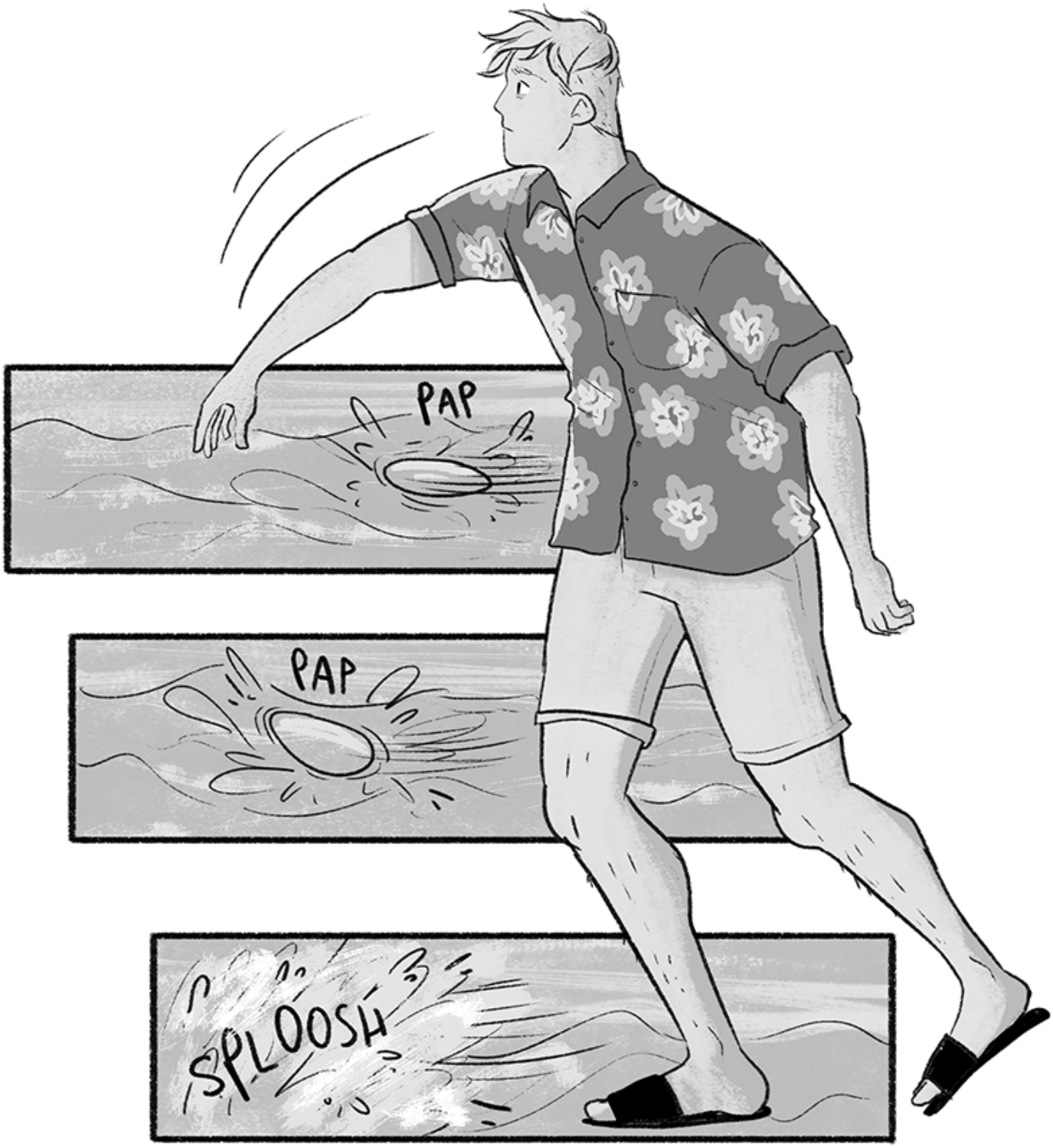
Feeling better?
Yeah.
Coming back to the table?
Yep.
LEAVE
I have to go!! I love you!
I-

CLICK
... love you



Now what?




PAP
PAP
SPLOOSH

1067

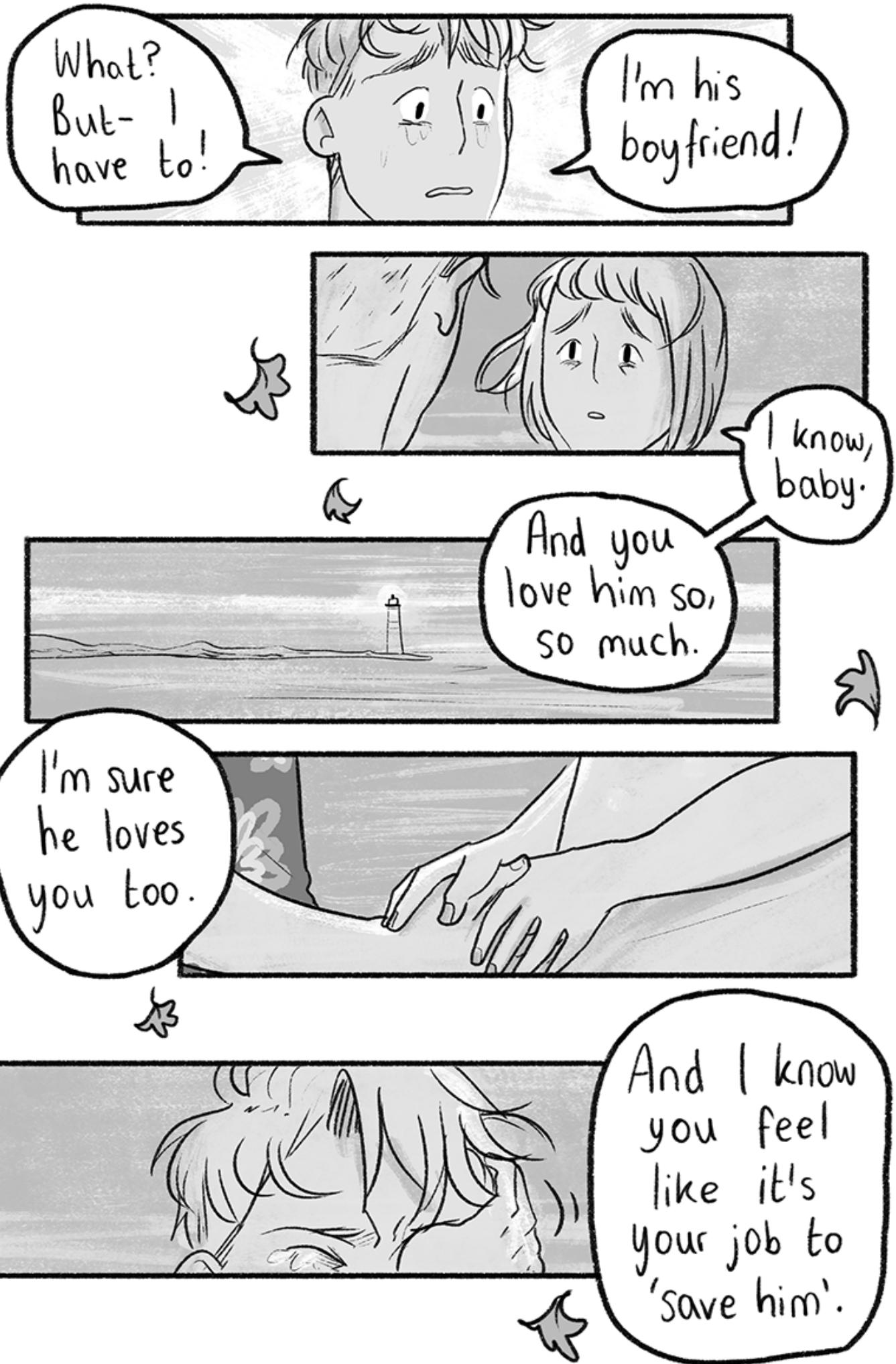
Baby? You've been down here for nearly twenty minutes.

Sweetheart... what's wrong?
I think Charlie has an eating disorder. And I don't know what to do.
An eating disorder... Are you sure?
Yeah, he- he just can't eat sometimes. A lot of the time.

He finds eating really difficult and it makes him so anxious, and it's gotten really bad lately,
and I've been trying to get him to talk to his parents but he said he just CAN'T, he can't talk to them about stuff like that, and-
I just don't know what to do now. I don't want to force him to eat because that would just make him upset and stressed, but...
... if I don't do anything, then he'll- he'll just-

1070

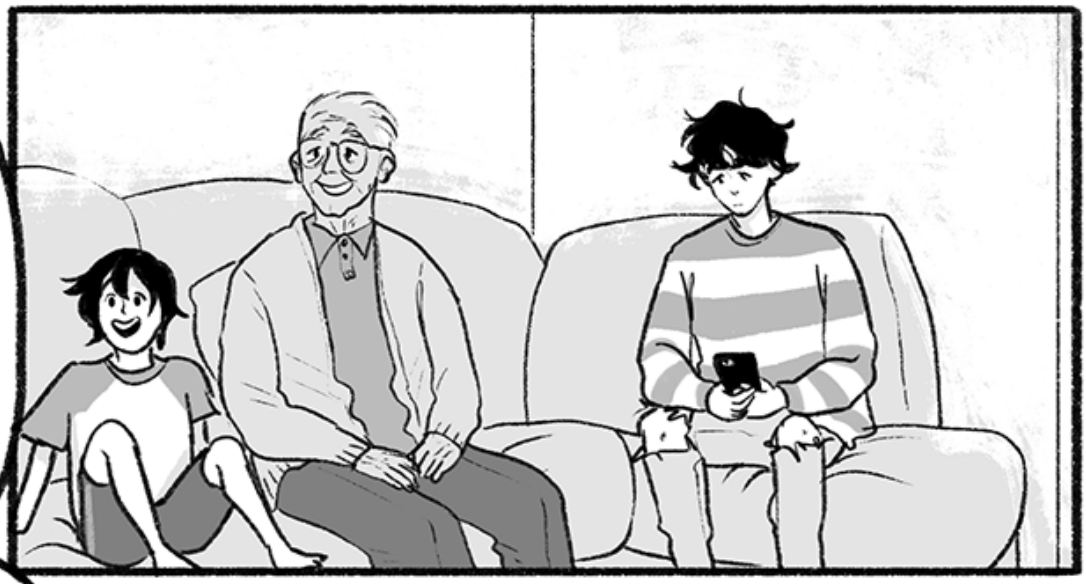
You're sixteen, sweetheart.
This is a lot to put on a sixteen-year-old's shoulders.
It's okay to be scared.
I don't know what to do. I don't know how to fix it.
Maybe you can't, darling.

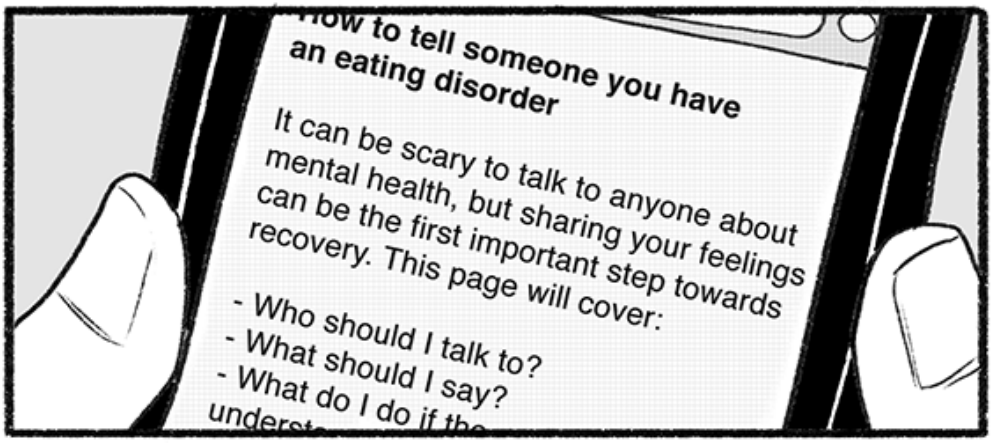

What? But- I have to!
I'm his boyfriend!
I know, baby.
And you love him so, so much.
I'm sure he loves you too.
And I know you feel like it's your job to 'save him'.

I know it feels like you're both each other's whole world,
but that dependency isn't healthy for either of you.
Charlie needs to seek help from someone who isn't his sixteen-year-old boyfriend.

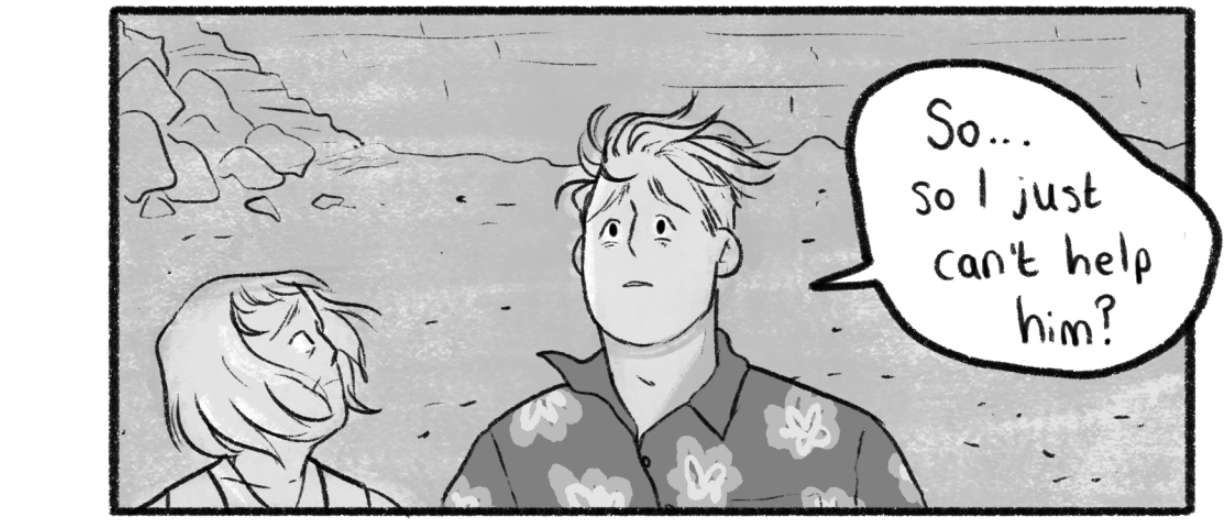
He needs help from a doctor or a therapist-

someone who knows about eating disorders and how to treat them.



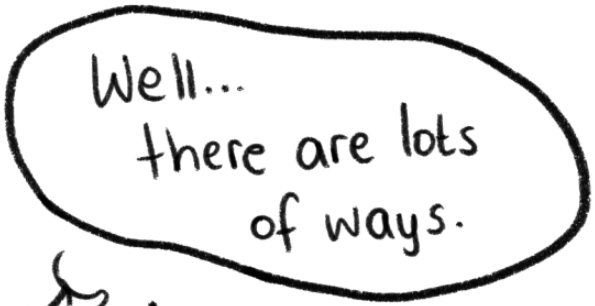


Love can't cure a mental illness.


So... so I just can't help him?

I didn't say that.

sniff H-how, then?
RUB

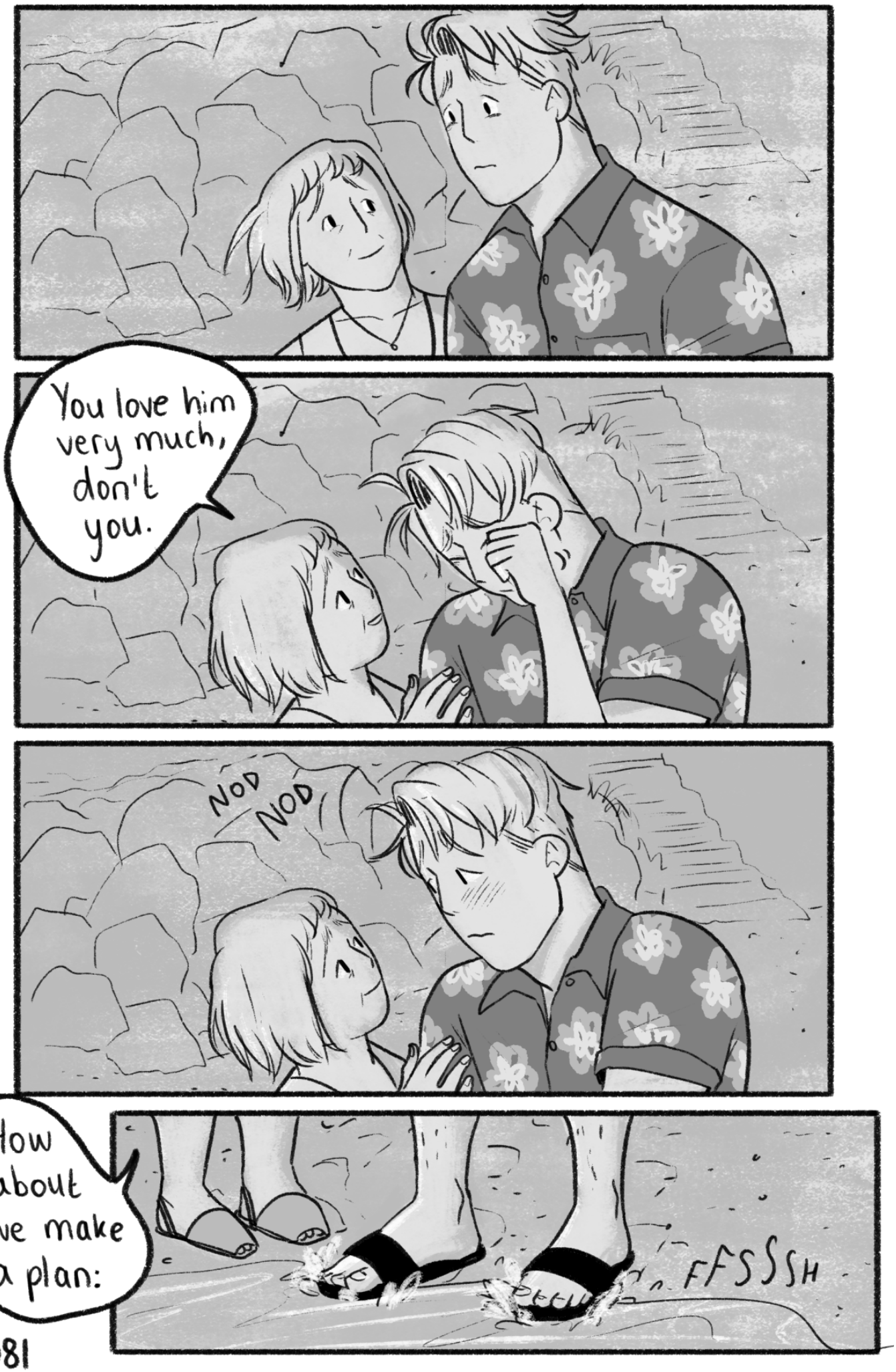

Well... there are lots of ways.

You can just be there.
To listen.
To talk.
To cheer him up if he's having a bad day.
WELL

And on the bad days...
Hey!!
Hey... Your mum let me in.
How are you feeling?
My throat hurts so bad
Wanna watch a movie?
I'm too tired.
You can ask what you could do to make things easier.
we could just nap
I'll make you sick too
I don't mind

Standing by his side,
even when things are hard-

But also knowing that...
sometimes people need more support than just one person can give.
That's love, darling.
1079
1080

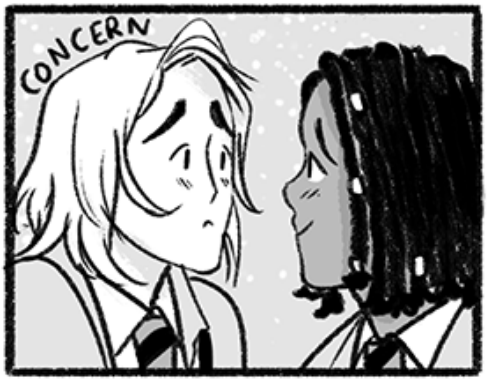

You love him very much, don't you.
NOD NOD
How about we make a plan:
FFSSSH

When we get home, me and you can sit down and do some proper research about how we could help Charlie talk to his parents or to a doctor.
Does that sound okay?
FSSSSSH
Yeah.

i can’t wait to see you at school tomorrow!!!!!!!!

Same!!!!!!! I MISS YOU
7
!!
!?!
!!?
!!
Get me the fuck out of here.
You mean you actually want to go back to school?
Literally anywhere's better than this house.

Hey, are you feeling better??
Yeah, I feel fine!
Sure?
Yes, I promise!

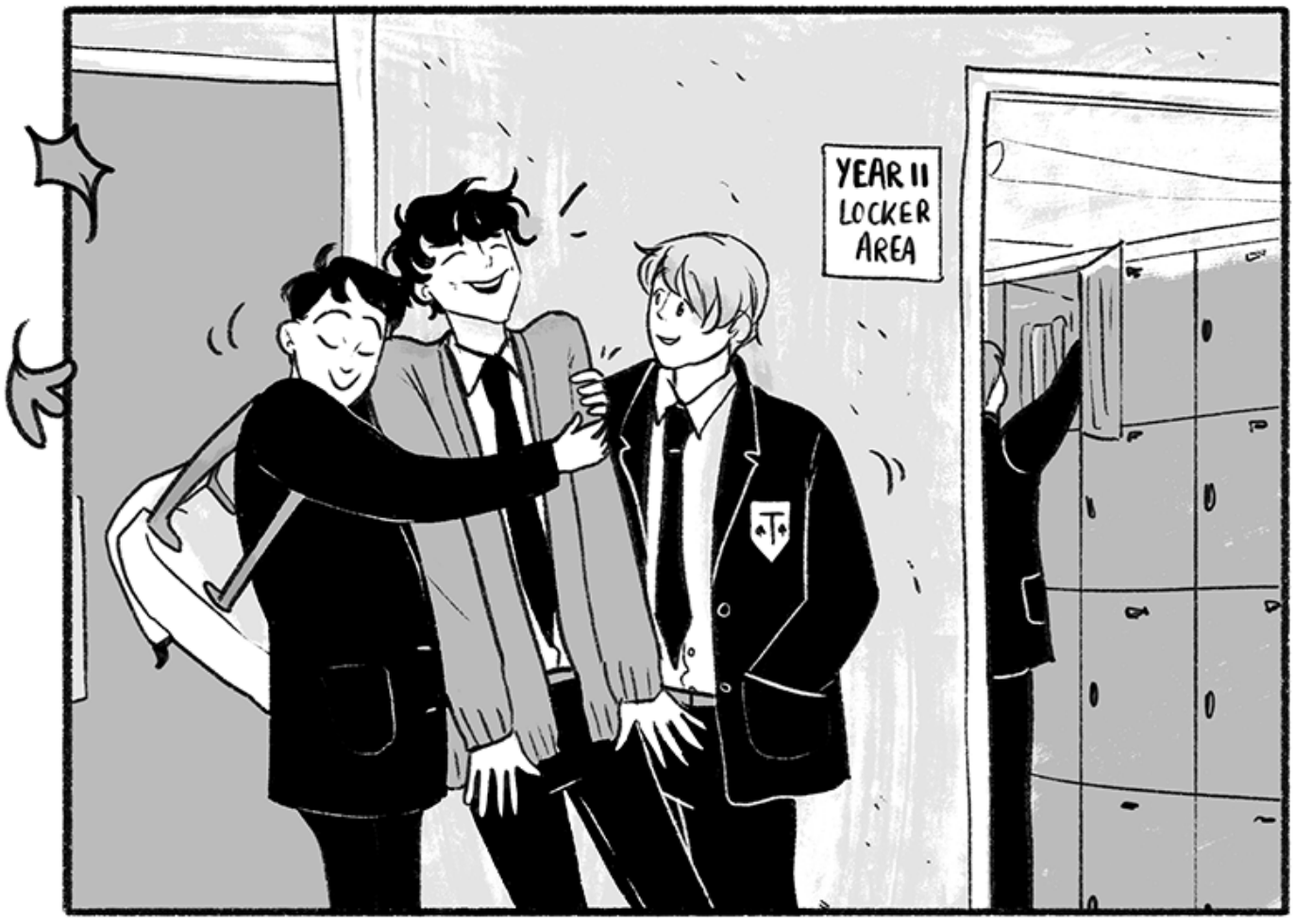

CONCERN

Well you've definitely given me your cold now.
I said I'm better!!
It's okay. I know you can't resist me 'cause I'm so sexy.
For God's sake.

I can't believe I'm a Sixth Former!!
I always forget you're a year older than me.
Same. I feel so old. But I'm so excited about A-Levels!!
You're excited about A-Levels?
Yeah!! Art, textiles, film studies, and English. And no more PE ever again.

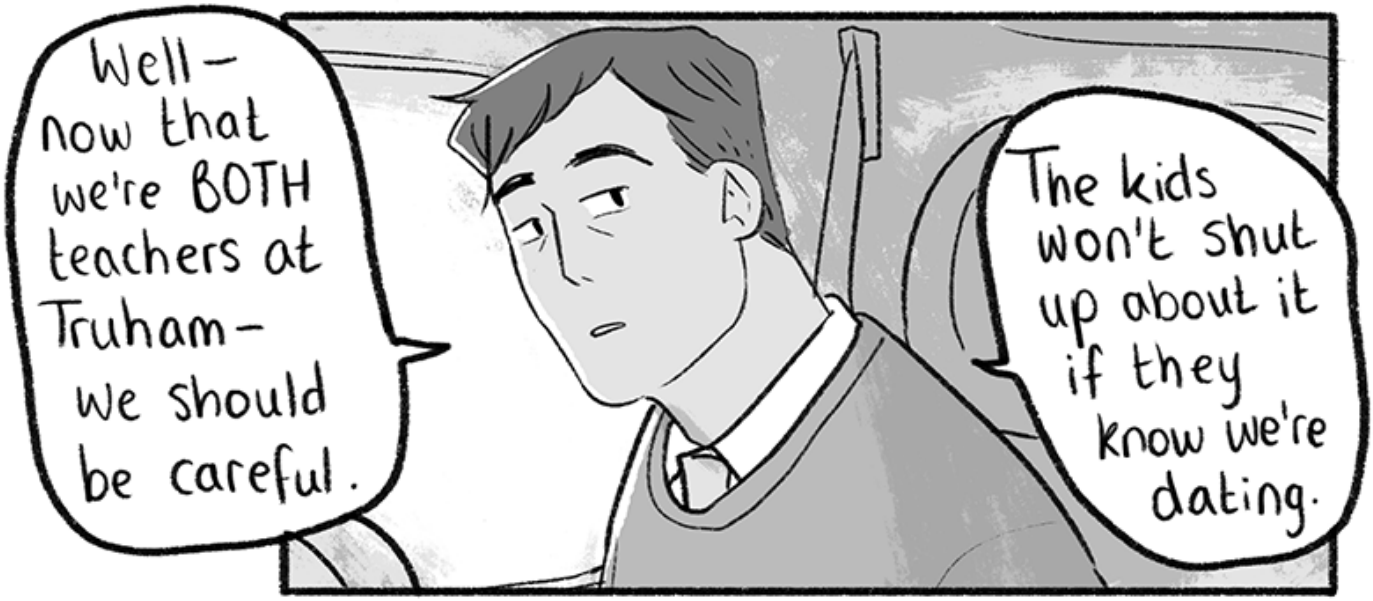
So... meet you after school?
Yeah
Can I kiss you goodbye?
We're literally just going to school!
But it's what all the couples do outside the school gate!
You are SUCH a dork, I swear to God

SIXTH FORM
10
71
72
73
74
83
84
94


YEAR 11
LOCKER
AREA

You'd better go before someone sees us sitting here together.
Truham Grammar School
Staff Car Park

Why? Is it forbidden to lift share with another teacher?

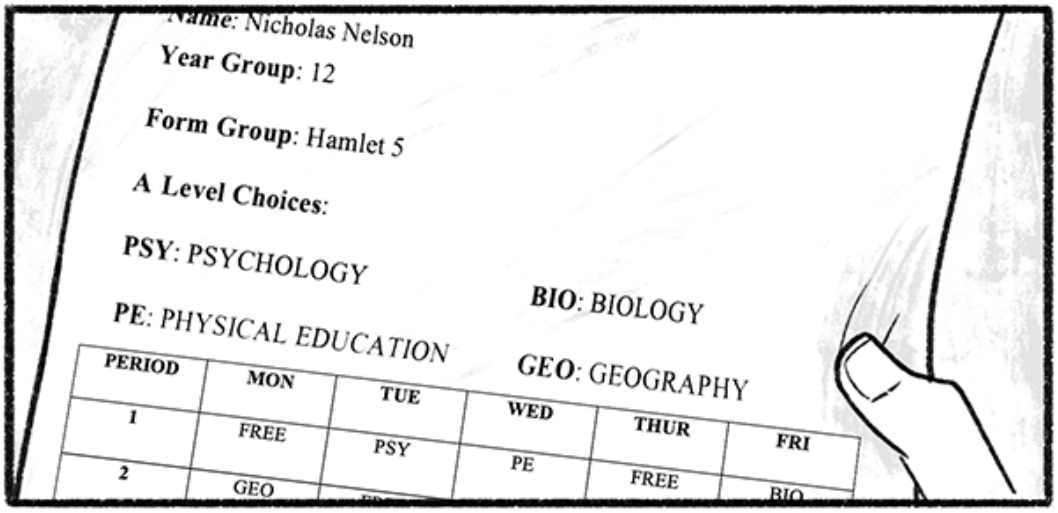

Well- now that we're BOTH teachers at Truham- we should be careful.
The kids won't shut up about it if they know we're dating.

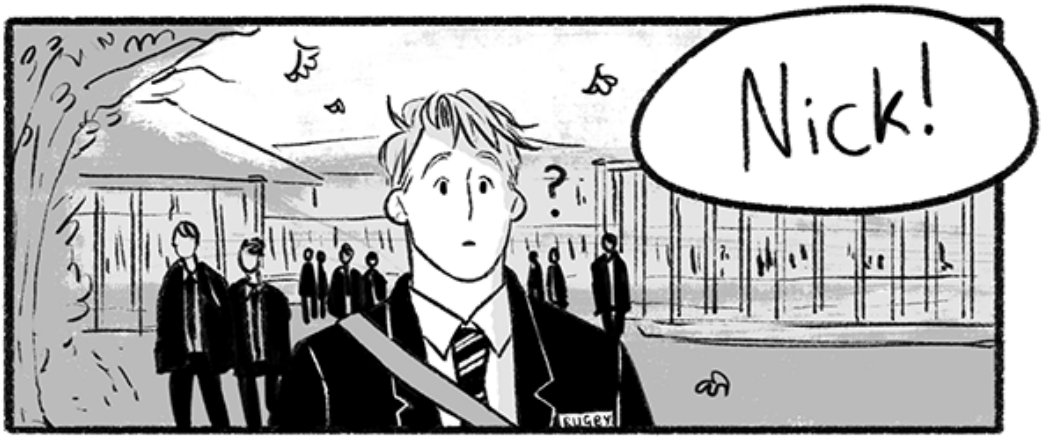
1089

So we're dating, then?

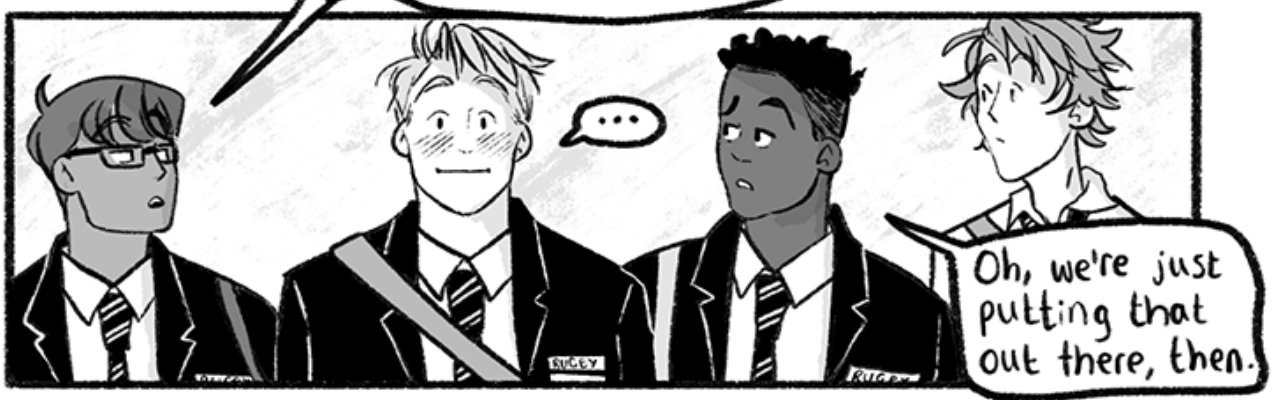
I sure hope we are. We spent the whole Summer seeing each other.
See you at lunch ♡

RUGBY


Name: Nicholas Nelson
Year Group: 12
Form Group: Hamlet 5
A Level Choices:
PSY: PSYCHOLOGY
BIO: BIOLOGY
PE: PHYSICAL EDUCATION
GEO: GEOGRAPHY
PERIOD
MON
TUE
WED
THUR
FRI
1
FREE
PSY
PE
FREE
2
GEO
BIO

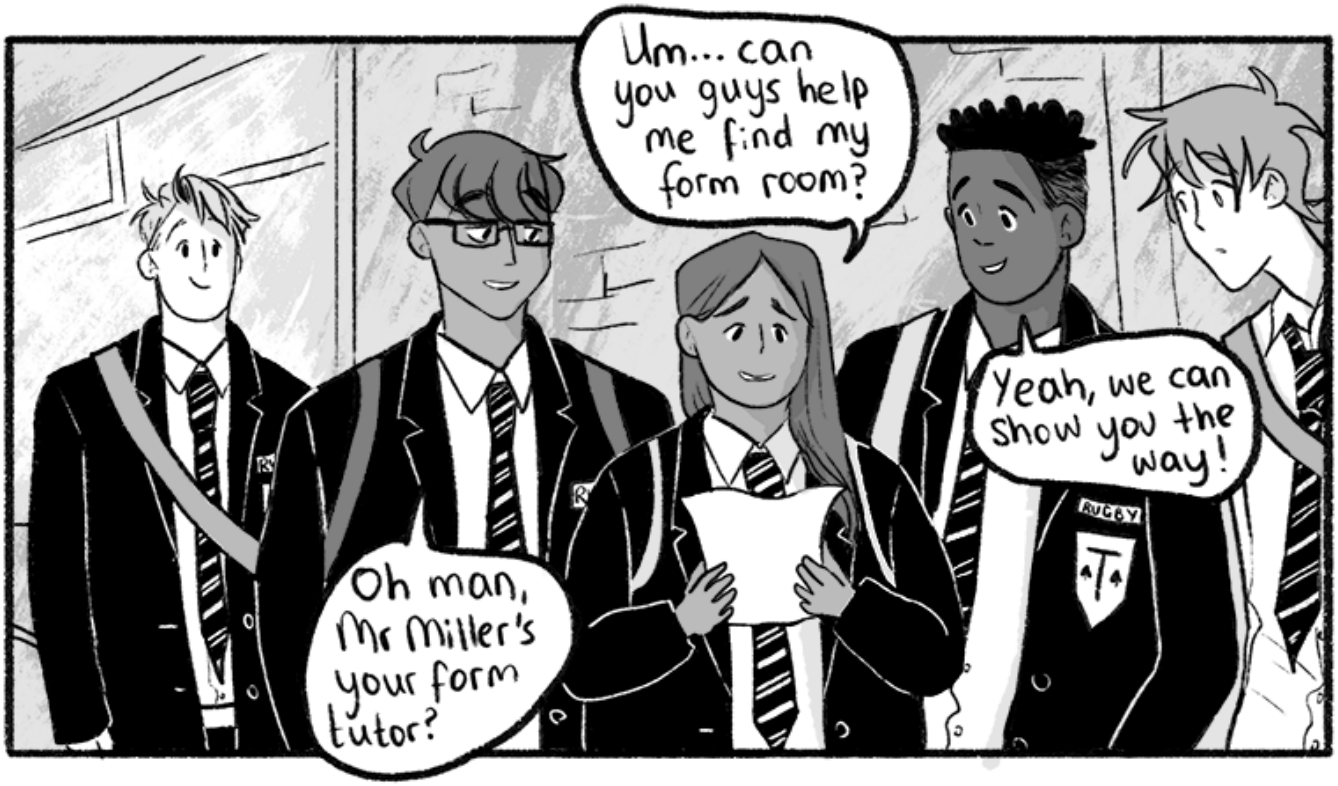


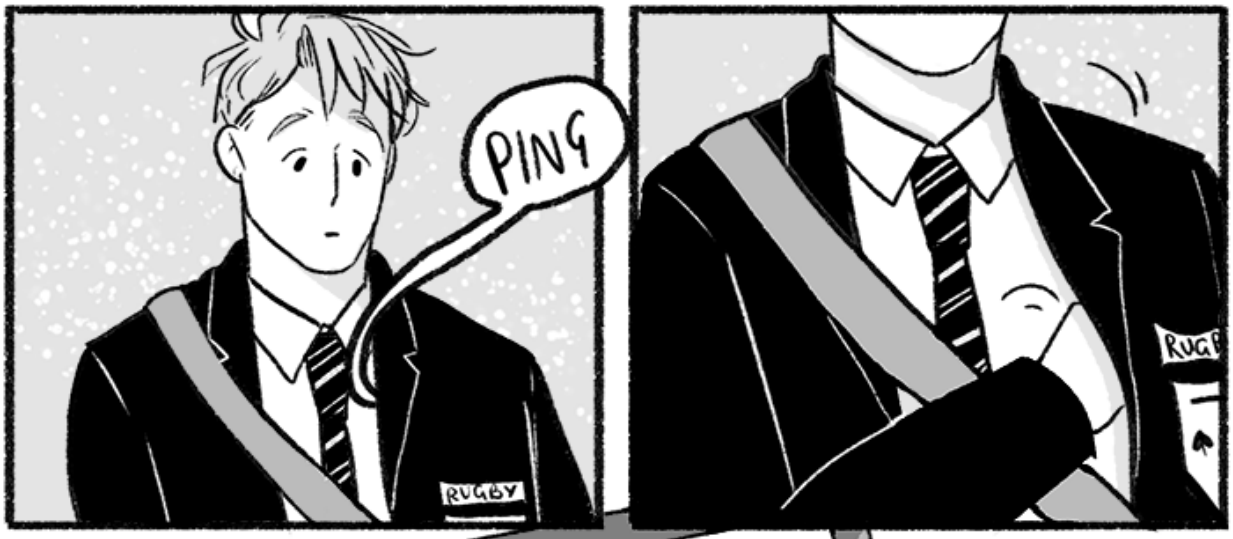
So it's nothing to do with the fact that you have a BOYFRIEND.



So... you guys heard about me and Charlie?
I mean... I think everyone in our year knows.
Sorry if we made you feel awkward about telling us.
Your "good mates" comment probably didn't help.
That was ONE TIME.
When will you stop bringing that up?

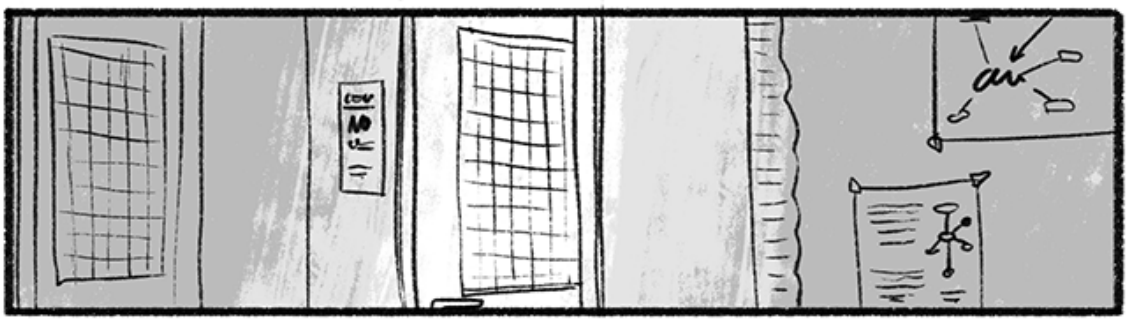
Can't believe Nick's the first one of us to be in a relationship
Same
What d'you mean you 'can't believe'?
Nick!
Sahar! Hey!!
Guys, this is Sahar!
Hey!
Hey!
I kinda forgot girls were allowed into Truham for Sixth Form, not gonna lie
1094


Um... can you guys help me find my form room?
Yeah, we can show you the way!
Oh man, Mr Miller's your form tutor?
RUGBY


PING
RUGBY

8:07
4G
Charlie
Same!!!!!!! I MISS YOU
Today
hey are you at school yet
NEARLY
hurry up i need to kiss you

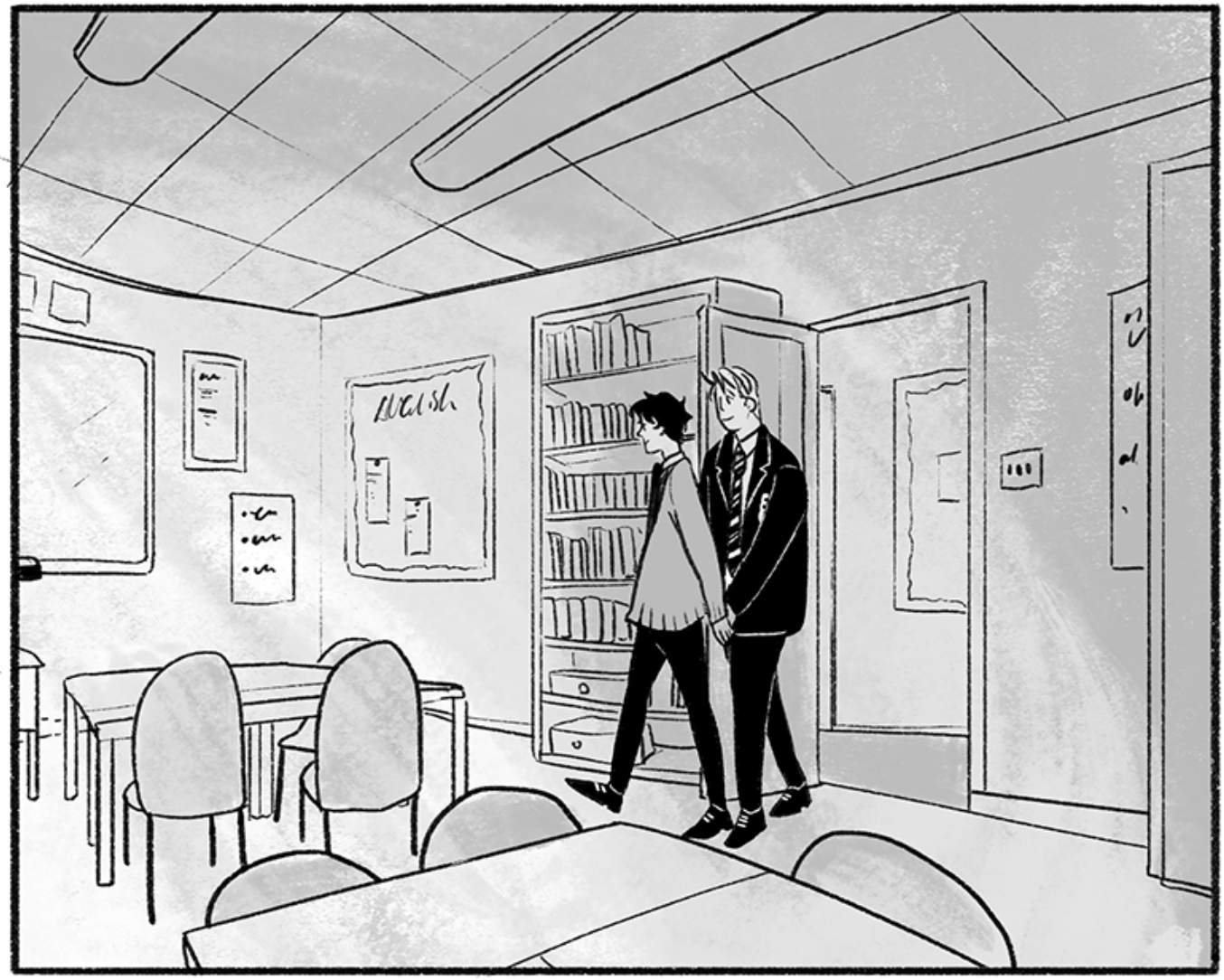
SQUEEZE



B23
B23

Hey
Hey
No kiss?
Hug first
Okay ♥

Okay, it still feels weird to kiss in public
Well, it's not like we want an audience
They're dating!
... This classroom's free
Come on! We've only got five minutes before form!



PULL

Missed you

so much
yeah
missed you too

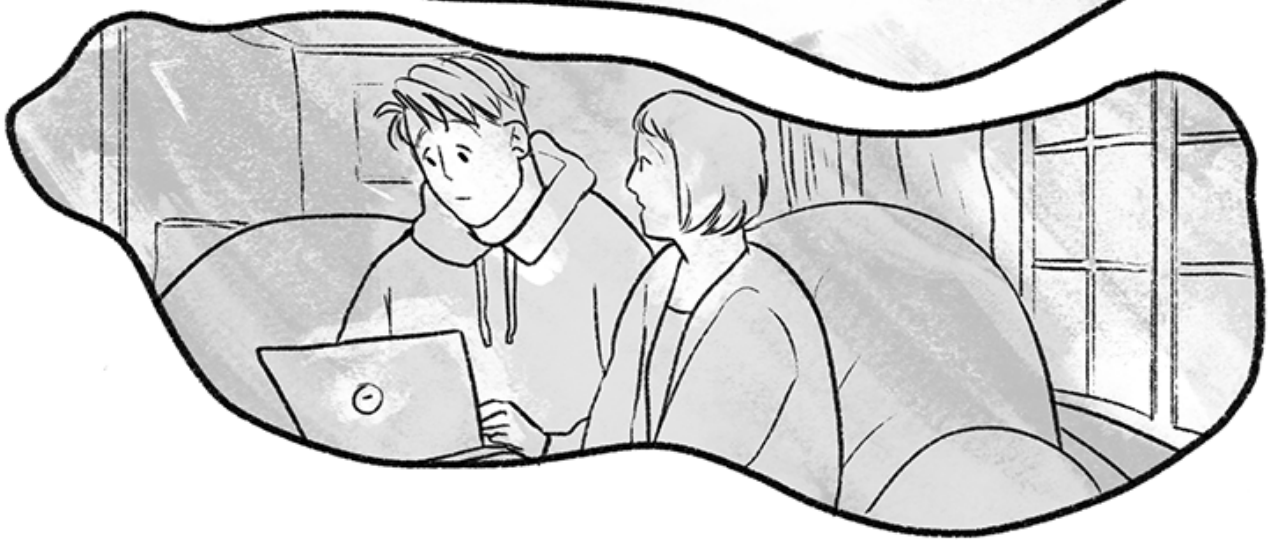
Wait- you're wearing the Sixth Form tie!
Well... yeah?
Haha... I'm dating a Sixth Former
So??
...so, that's hot
Charlie!!

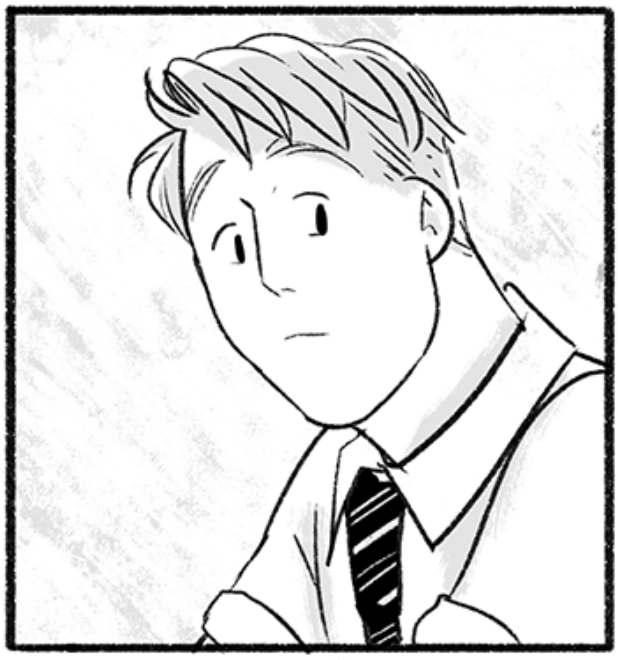
Welcome back Hamlet 5!
zzz

If you're worried about a loved one

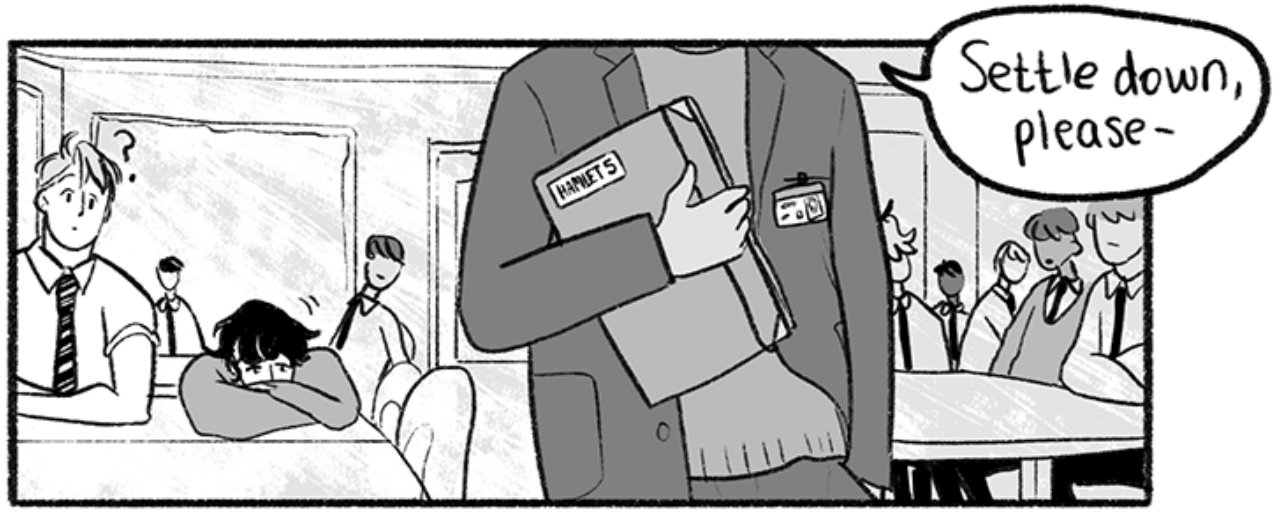
It can be difficult to bring up the topic of mental health, even with those closest to us. You may be worried about saying the wrong thing or upsetting the person in question. But breaking the silence can be the first important step towards recovery.

Here are some tips for talking to a loved one about their mental health:





Okay class!


Settle down, please-
HAMLET'S

I'm Mr Farouk. I'll be your form tutor this year.

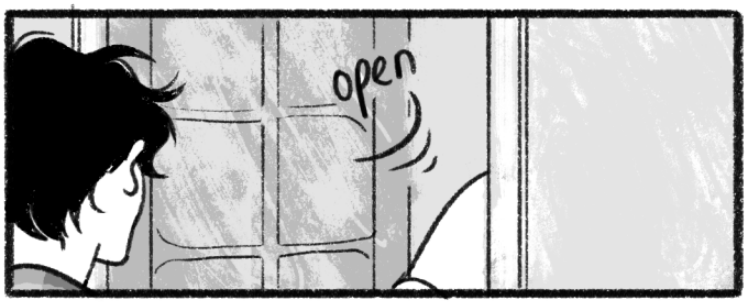
Did you fall asleep?
Haha woops

1107

I'm so tired

D'you wanna come round mine on Saturday?
Obviously! It's your birthday!
My dad is gonna be there, so... I was thinking I could introduce you to him?
Oh!! Yeah!
Nick and Charlie! Be quiet, please!

Saturday
FLATTEN
ew
HAPPY BIRTHDAY
DRRRINNNG


open

Hey...

Hey... What's wrong? Are you okay?

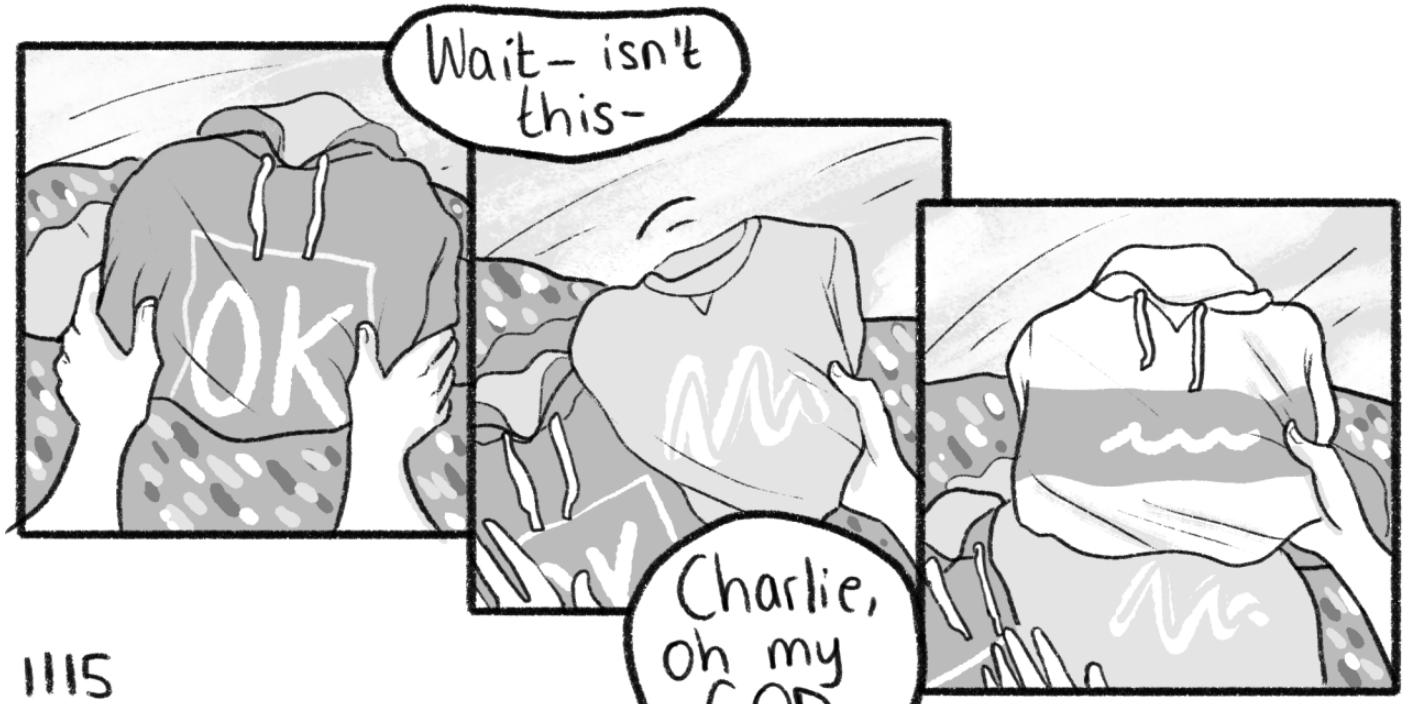
My dad couldn't come. He said something came up.
17
I mean... I guess he never said he'd definitely come, but... yeah...
...

DROP
HAPPY BIRTHDAY
It's fine, I don't really care...
Well, we're still gonna have a super fun birthday afternoon

17

10 x driving lessons
VOUCHER
Love, Mum xxx

Nick


Wait- isn't this-
Ok
Charlie, oh my GOD

1115

Is this every single jumper you've borrowed??
HA HA HA!!

You sure you want to give these back?
Well... they don't smell like you anymore!

You like my smell?
I- Don't make it weird!!

Nick!!!
WRESTLE
HA
HA
HA
HA!!

I like your smell too
You're making it weird
Don't care

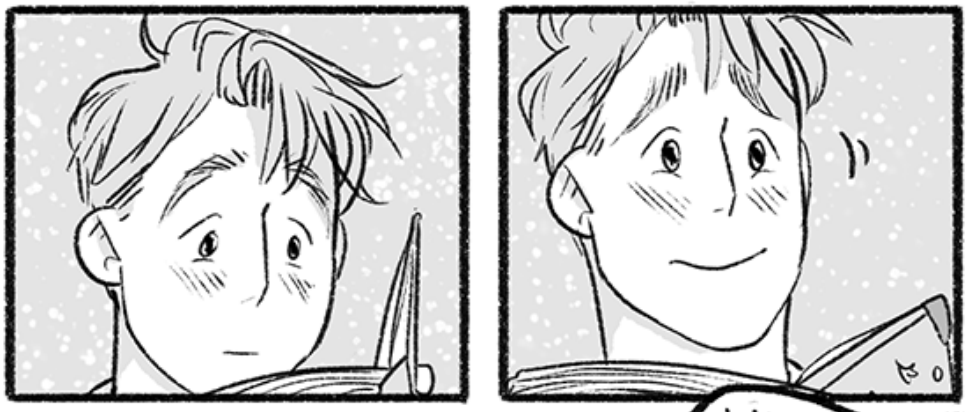
LEAN
WAIT - you have to keep one!
Look, I wore this one yesterday!
... Do you like me wearing your clothes?
I mean ... yeah

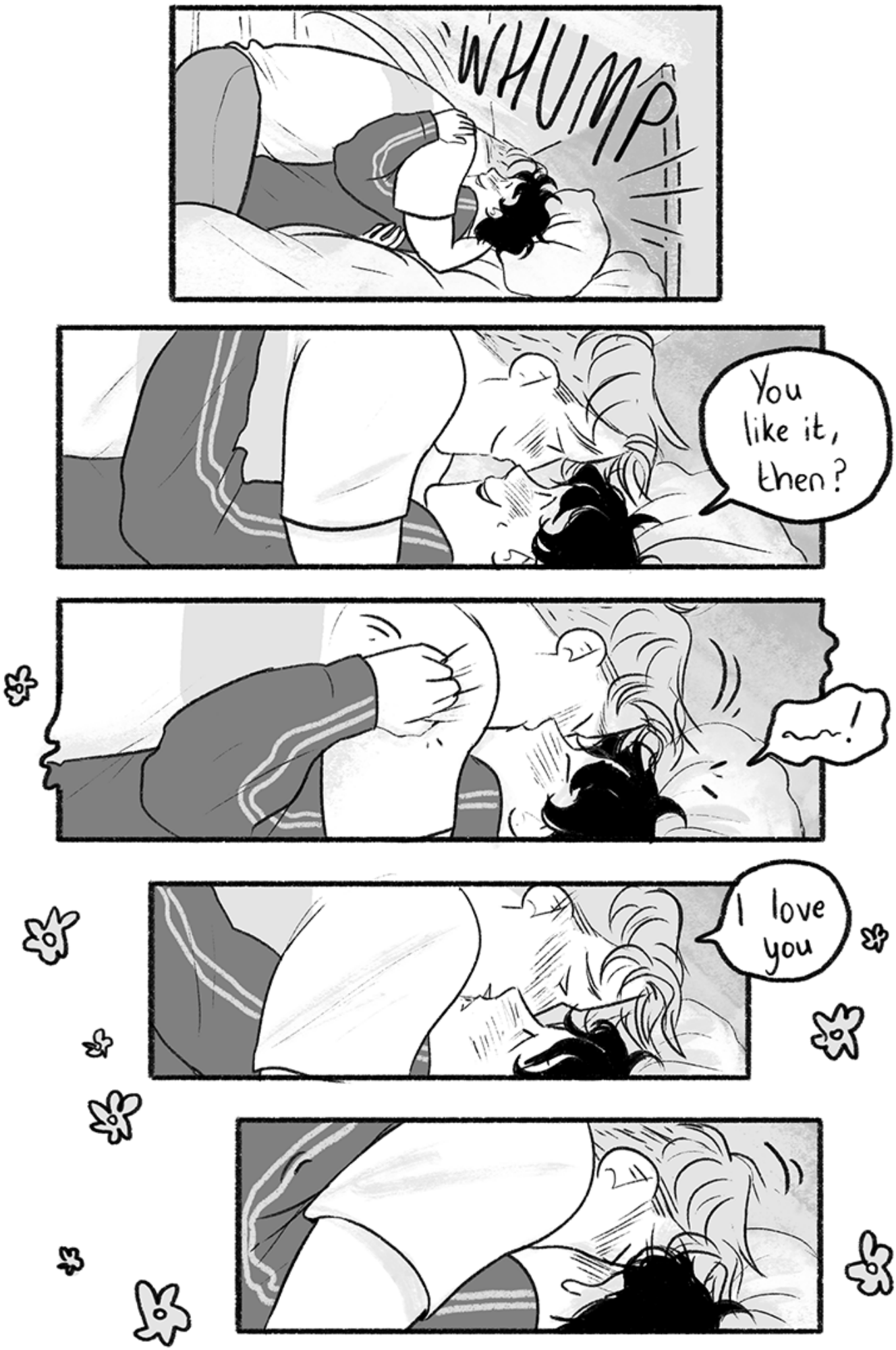
There's an actual present in the bottom of the bag.
...
Don't judge my wrapping skills

CONTENT WARNING: Discussions of mental health, including eating disorders

you gave me a photo of us in the snow, so here's one of us in the sun

Love Charlie xxx



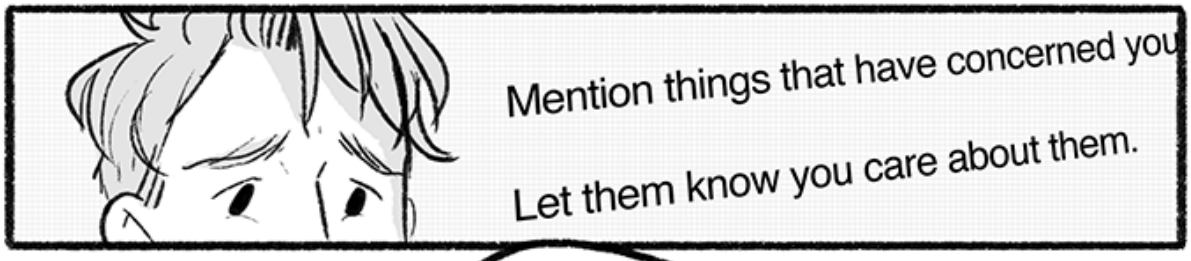

WHUMP
You like it, then?
~~~!
I love you
~~~

h-huh?
Z Z Z
Char... you said wake you up at eight

What... it's eight already?
Ugh... I don't wanna go home
...
Starting the conversation
1. Choose a place you both feel safe
Charlie- wait a sec

Um-
Yeah?

You know I love you
Yeah! I love you too
I... well...


Mention things that have concerned you
Let them know you care about them.

1124

I'm really glad we've talked about ... you know, um, mental health stuff, but... I'm still really worried about you.

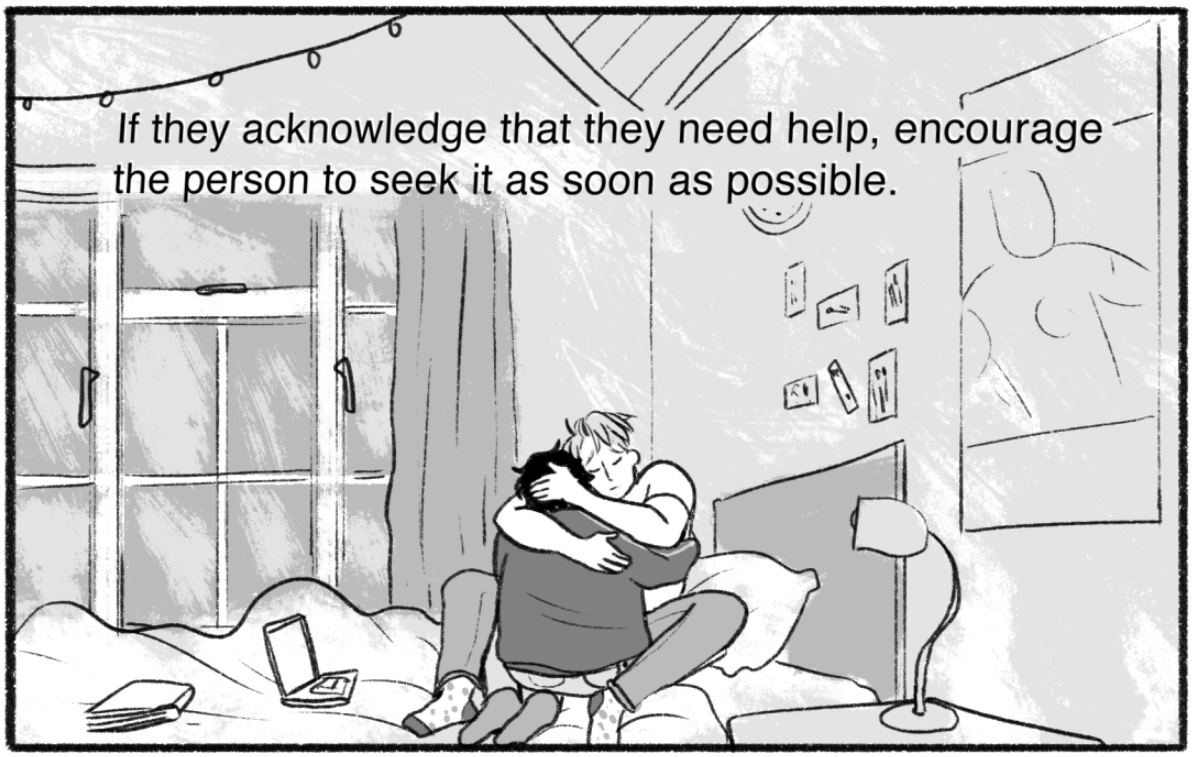
Try to avoid centering the conversation around food or weight.
...
Not just about the eating thing!
I...
I've noticed you've been really stressed and tired.
Some days... you just seem really sad.

And sometimes I've made things worse-
I said the wrong thing, or I didn't know what to do!
I can't fix this!
I really want you to talk to your parents or... a doctor, or something like that

I...
can't...
sob

I know it's hard, but-
sob
I'm so worried about you and I- I can't make you better
I just don't see how I could ever get better
You can!
I promise you can, you just have to ask for help

NOD
NOD


If they acknowledge that they need help, encourage the person to seek it as soon as possible.

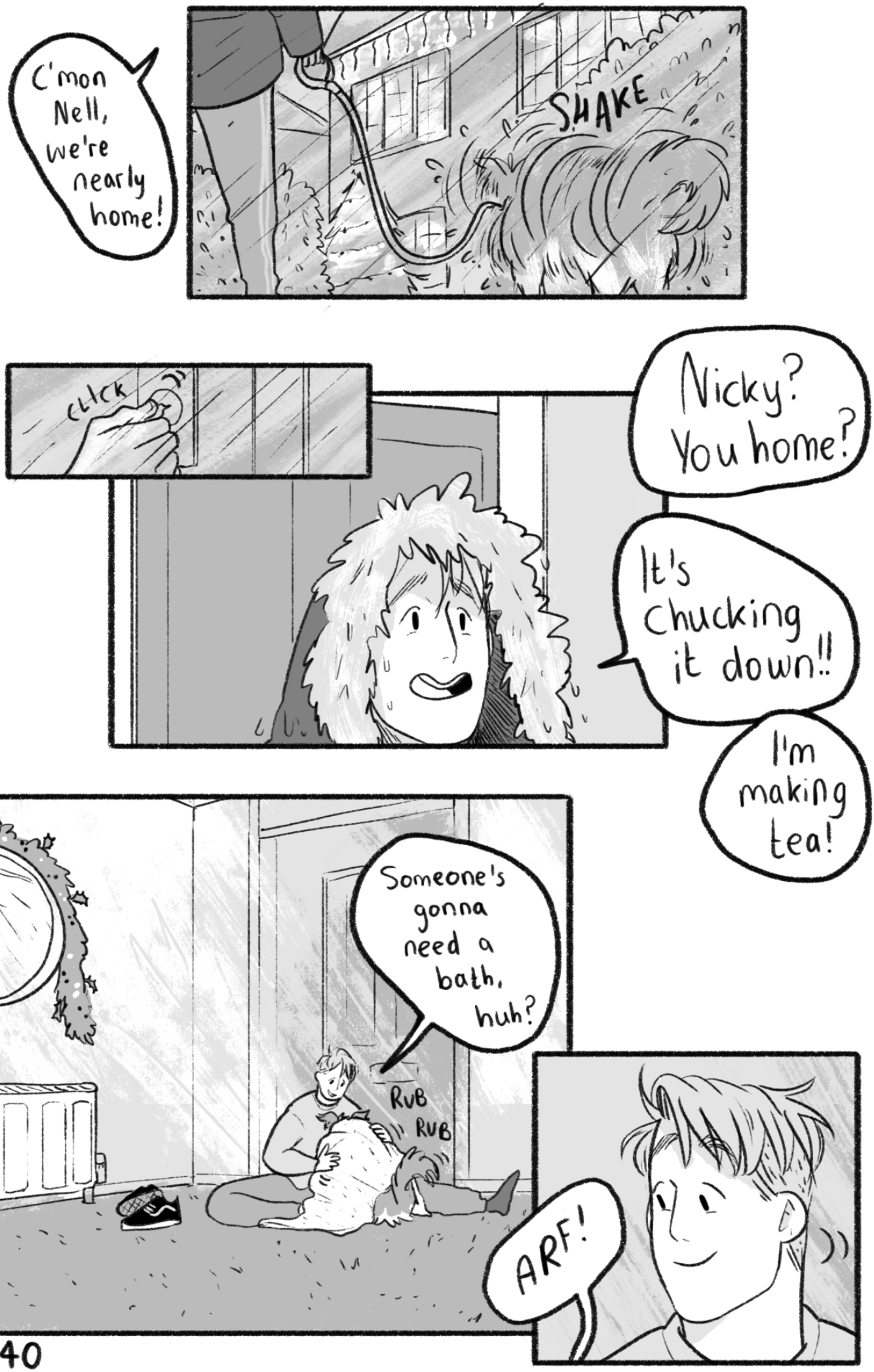
What if my parents say I'm faking it, or- or they get angry-

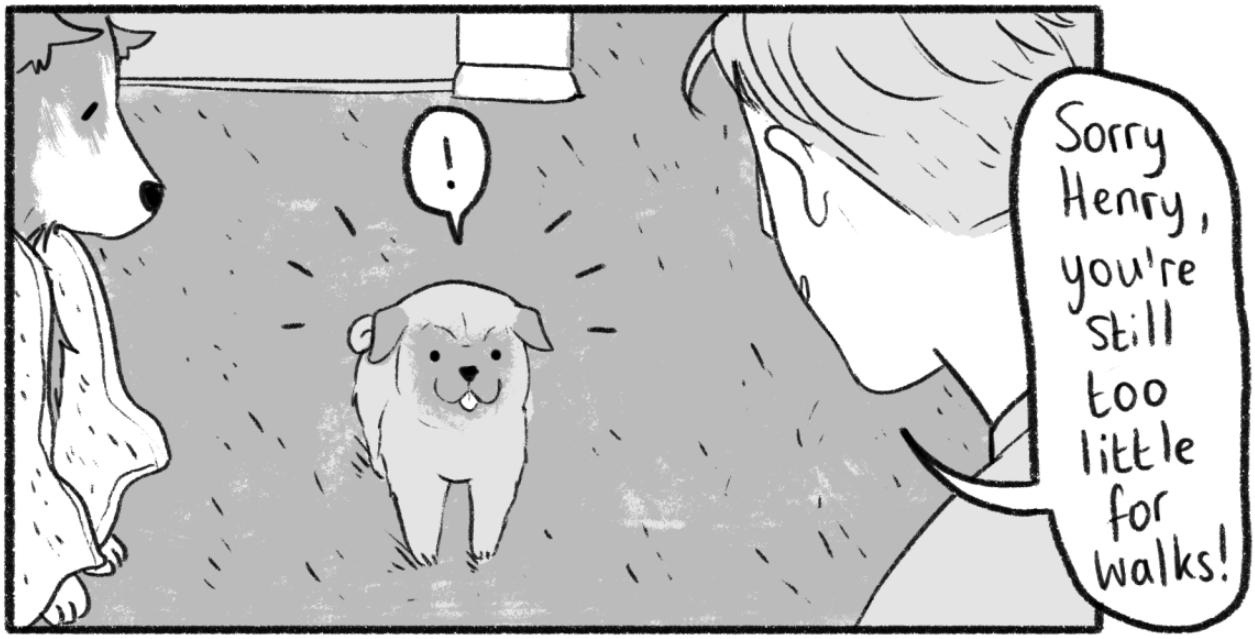
What if I came with you? I dunno... just to hold your hand? They probably wouldn't get angry if I was there!
NOD NOD
Um, also... I read online that sometimes it's easier to write it down?

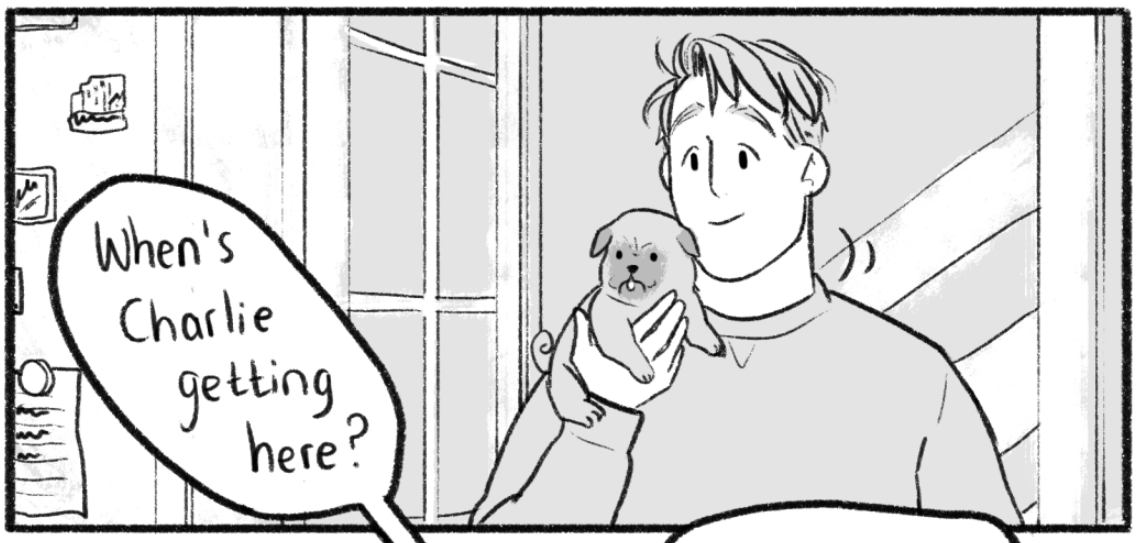
Maybe that sounds a bit silly, but...
Would that help you talk to them?
Do you have a pen and paper?

6. JOURNEY

FSSSSSH
SPLOOSH
nearly four months later
FSSSSH


C'mon Nell, we're nearly home!
SHAKE
CLICK
Nicky? You home?
It's chucking it down!!
I'm making tea!
Someone's gonna need a bath, huh?
RUB RUB
ARF!


!
Sorry Henry, you're still too little for walks!


When's Charlie getting here?

In a couple of hours. We're not leaving for the party till eight.
Okay, well, make sure you lock up the house before you go, okay? And finish tidying your room!
HAPPY NEW YE

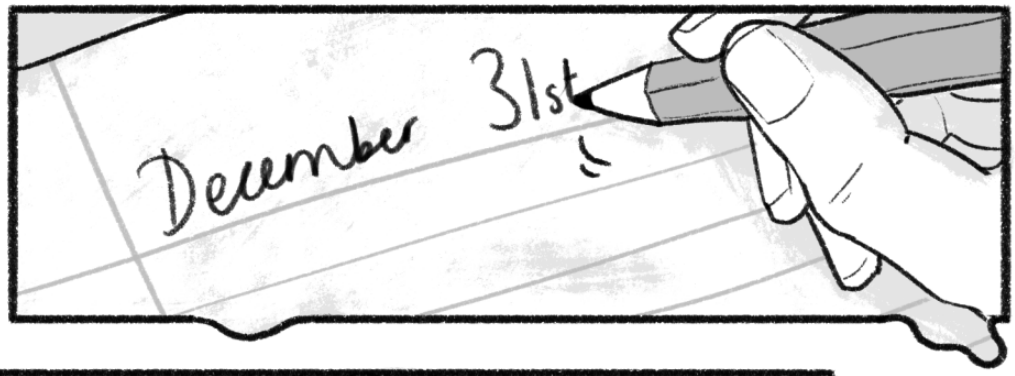
New year, tidy room!
I don't think that's a saying ?
It should be

Have a good evening!
You too!

TIDY
TIDY

TIDY
TIDY

What've you found, Henry?
journal
Oh
I guess I haven't written in here for a while...
?
journal

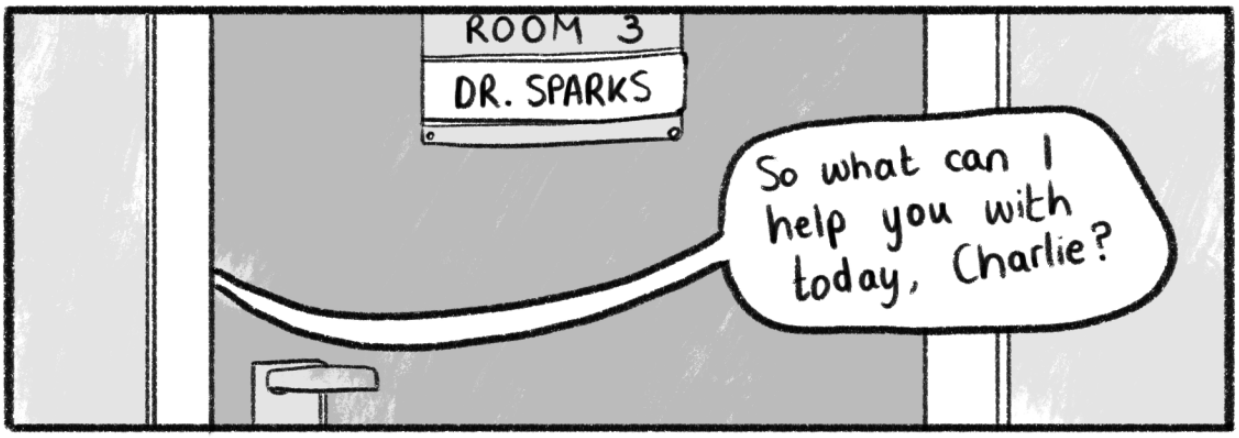


So... I haven't written anything for a while. The past few months have been stressful, but... I think things are looking up?

Although - you know that saying that things sometimes get worse before they get better?

Yeah. I think I understand that now.

But this was extra scary.



For obvious reasons.

The doctor was helpful, and referred Charlie to an eating disorder service, but the waiting list was so long.

And things
started to get
really bad
after that.

I'm fine
His eating disorder got worse. I could tell, but he wouldn't talk to me about it.

He skipped school a lot, which made his mum mad at him like all the time.
Charlie
Today
hey, you off school today too??
Read 11:32

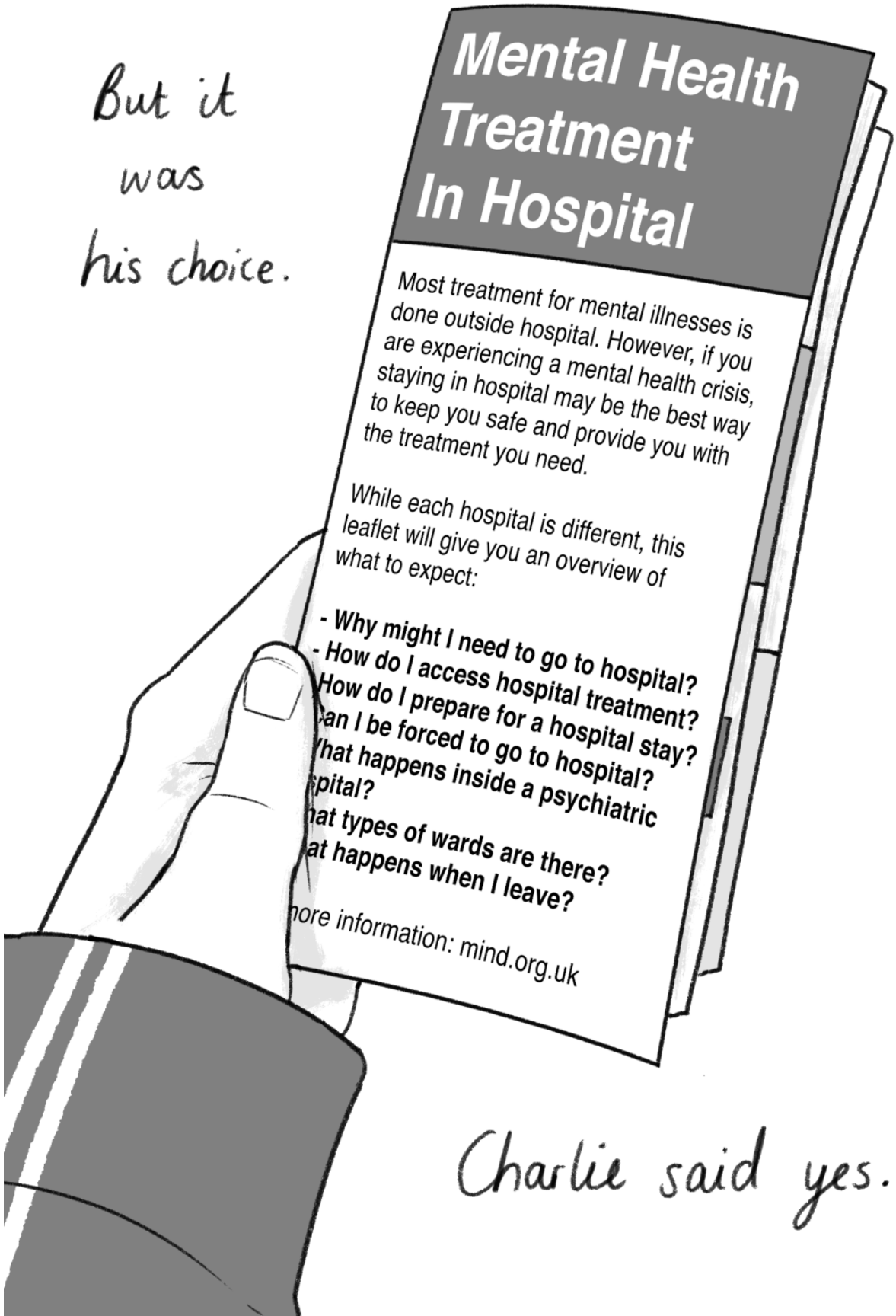
I'll just eat at home!
His thoughts and behaviour about food became... obsessive. It didn't make logical sense anymore. I guess it never did, really. But he'd always lie about it.

And you know he told me he used to self-harm?
Well, that kind of started again.
I think mostly because of the stress of everything else.
Sorry
It's not your fault
I didn't know what to do except just be there for him.

But things just got harder for him.
There was one night in October where his parents had to take him to A&E.
I just feel so stupid- but- but I can't stop it-
I know, it's not your fault
He knew the compulsions made no sense.
But he didn't know how to stop them.
Neither did I.
1150

Charlie's mental health was assessed while he was there, and they told him that it'd be best if he spent some time as an inpatient.

But it was his choice.

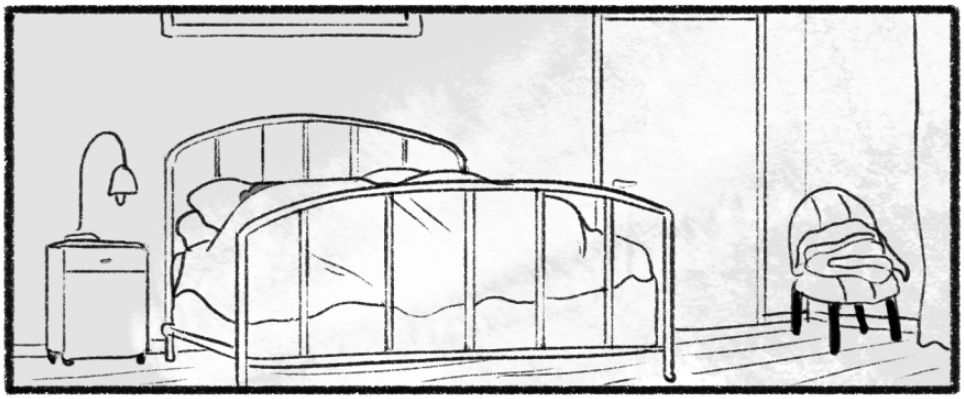


Charlie said yes.

It happened really fast.
I was scared.
He was scared.
Pfft I swear you're getting more emotional than me
Ssh
I mean, I only knew about psychiatric hospitals from movies, and the nearest available space at a ward was a two-hour drive away.
1152

We knew it was the right thing to do.
CL17 SYJ

He had to at least try and see if it would help.



blink

SIT UP

What are you doing?

...I accidentally slept over again.
Well...
You could just move in?
.....

We don't have to talk about it now
No, I- I do want to-
Just come back to bed, you dork
Okay

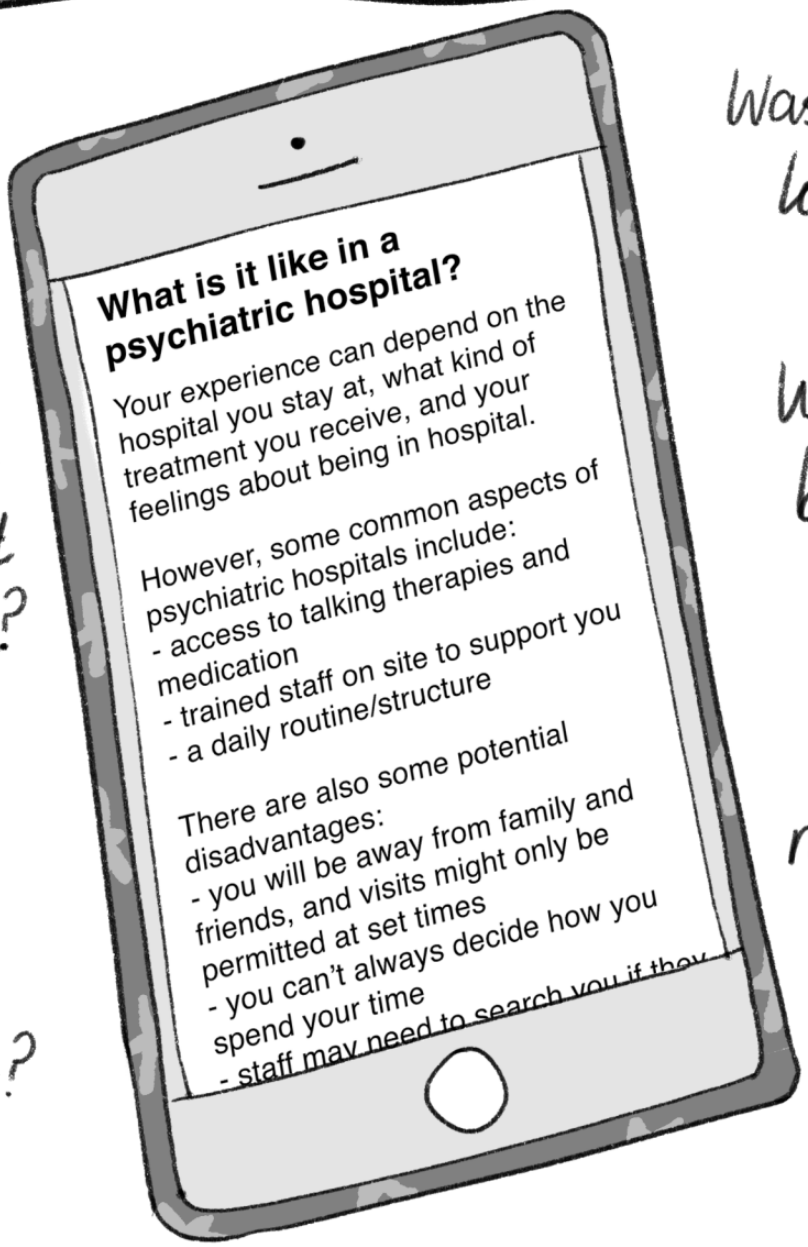
It was weird being at school without Charlie.
I couldn't stop worrying about him.
1154

We spoke on the phone when we could, and obviously I visited a lot too, but-

Was he homesick?

Was the treatment helping?

Was it making things worse?



Was he lonely?

Was he bored?

Had he made some friends?

It feels so awful to complain about my feelings when Charlie's been going through all of that, but I guess I've been pretty anxious these past few months.

But I talk to Mum about it a lot. That helps.

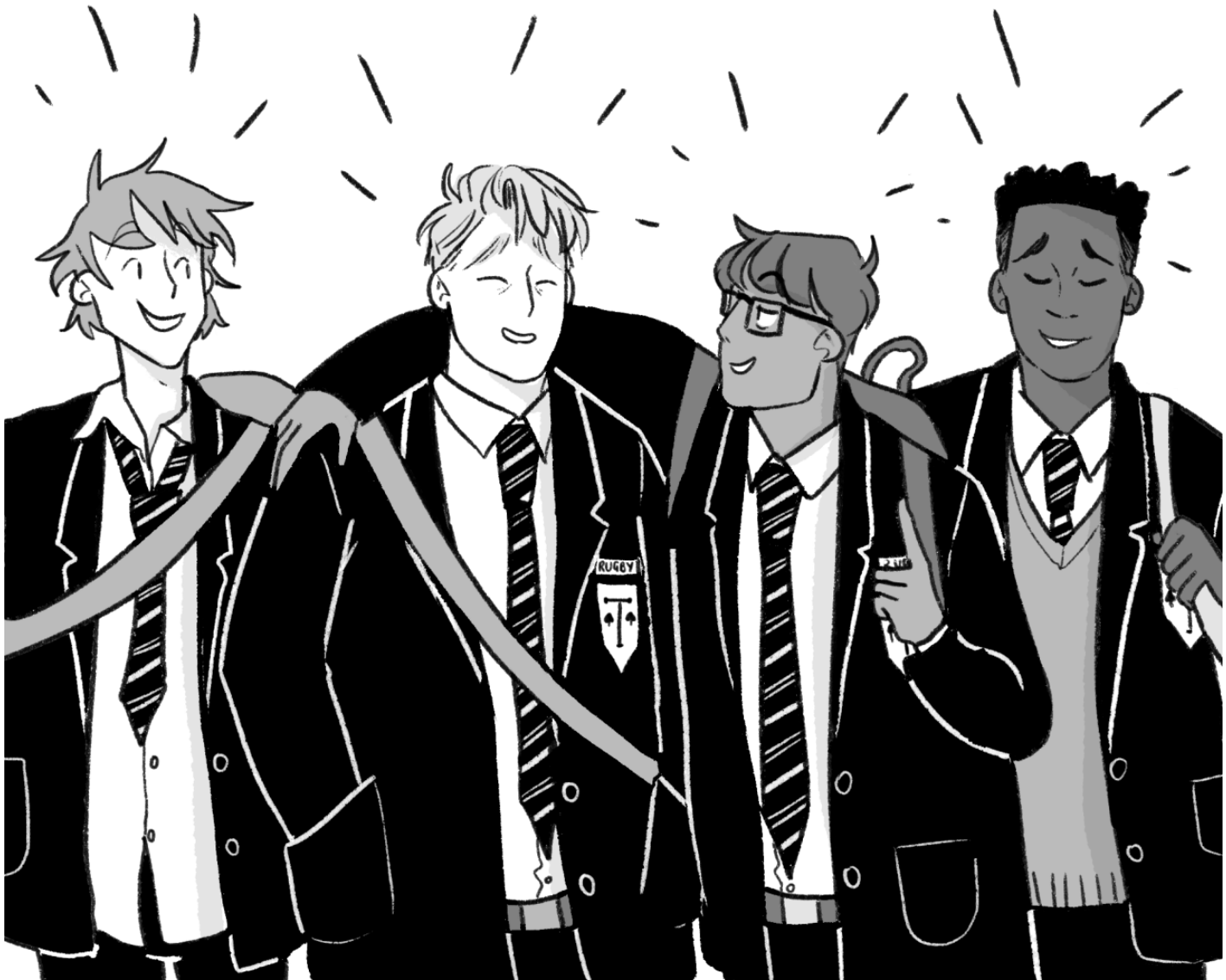
I've been hanging out more with my rugby mates, too.

Now that I'm out to them, I feel like I can just be myself around them. And we can just hang out and be chill.

Charlie asked me not to tell them what was going on with him.

He was kinda scared of it spreading around school.

They knew he was off school because he was unwell, though, so they've been supportive in their own way.



Charlie said I could keep the Paris Squad updated.

Elle Argent
darcy did you get the card for charlie?

Darcy Olsson
YEP i got a giant one, it's the length of my arm

Tara Jones
omg

Tao Xu
Nick does Charlie have access to a DVD player???
I was thinking we could send him some fun films to watch

Nick Nelson
yeah he does!!! Good idea, he literally said they don't have Netflix or anything and they've only got movies from like 2005 haha

Tara Jones
I got the gift basket! And some ribbons and stuff to make it pretty

Aled Last
i got him some art stuff!

Sahar Zahid
I got him a couple of books!! He said he likes to read so I hope that's okay

Nick Nelson
Do you all wanna come back to mine after school tomorrow?? You can sign the card and we can decorate the gift basket and stuff! also you can come on a walk with Nellie and me if you want!!

Darcy Olsson
I WOULD LIKE TO MEET NELLIE

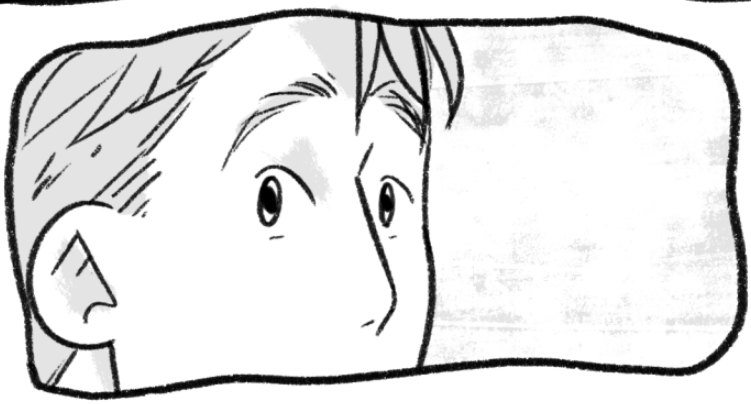
Elle Argent
i also would like to meet nellie!!!!

Tao Xu
I think we all would like to meet Nellie tbh

He didn't want them all visiting - I think it would have been too overwhelming. But they still found ways to help.

And they helped me too.

I'd go with Charlie's family to visit him a couple of times a week.
Part of me wished I could go every day, but he needed space.
I got to know Tori and Oliver pretty well during all the long car journeys.
Tori's kind of quiet, but I think she likes me? I dunno.



She's kind of... intense.

CONTENT WARNING: Discussions of mental health, including eating disorders and self-harm.

He came home in early December.

Just in time for the Christmas season.

He's still dealing with a lot, so he stayed off school for the rest of term.

Christmas Day was especially hard. He came round mine after a big argument with his mum.

He got to meet our new puppy.
Henry, which cheered him up
a bit, but...
?
It was
a difficult day.

It's not like seven weeks in hospital made him magically okay again.

I know I'm not an expert or anything, but from what I've learnt over the past few months, mental illnesses take a long time to go away completely... if they ever do.

This is probably only the start of a long journey.

But he's definitely doing better.

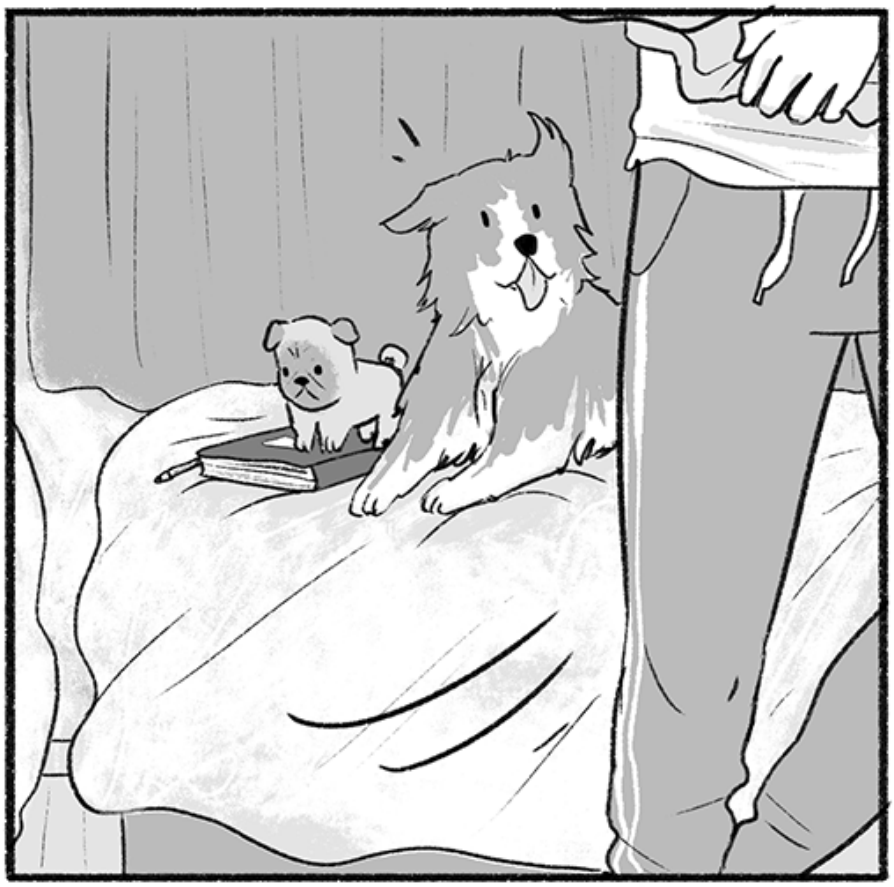
35
36
25
68
57
RUGBY
We've been messaging a lot while I'm at school.
Tao's been bringing him all the work he's missed.
GCSE
Yesterday we were just hanging out in his room...

NOËL
and he said something funny
and we just started laughing
and couldn't stop for ages

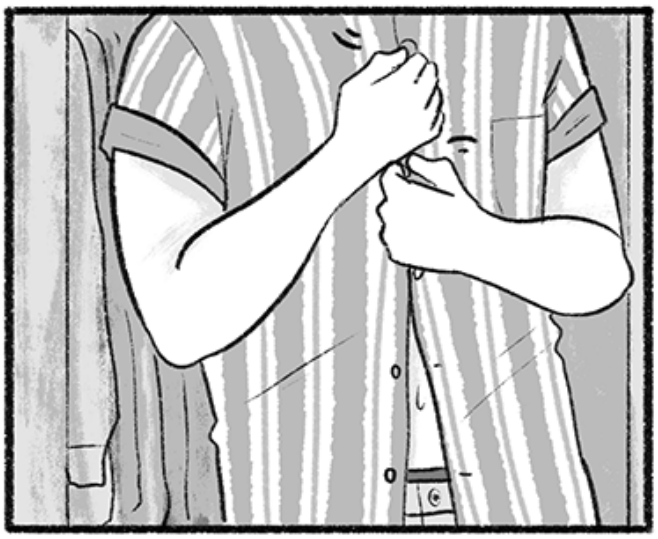
I love him
so much.

I love him so much.
Well, I guess that's my life update.

Anyway, I'd better go - Charlie will be here soon! We're going to a New Year's Eve party tonight!

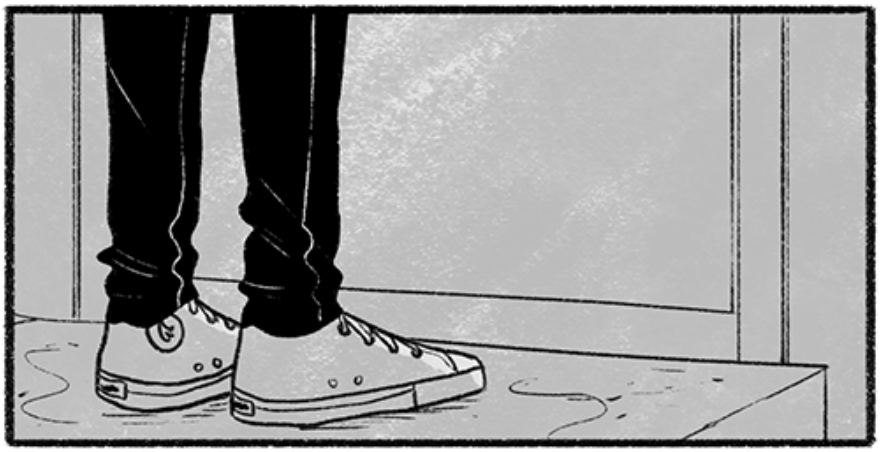


A guy in my year is having a big house party with fireworks and stuff.



It's the first time Charlie will have been back with a bunch of people from school. We can always leave if it's awful, but I'm excited.

I'm excited to just hang out at a party with my boyfriend.



Hey
Hey

How's my tiny boy?!
Arf?
He's missed you!

The dogsitters are here!
Hullo, Nicky boy!
Hi Gramps, hi Grandma!

Have a good time, boys!
We will!
I wish I could drive us there!
Not until you pass your test!
You know we can leave if it's too stressful
Yeah, okay
17
haha
chatter
chatter
haha

HAPPY NEW YEAR

They're here!!
I'm glad you came!!
Me too
We didn't know if you'd come!
Yeah! We have to leave at like half twelve, though
Nick and Charlie!! Come dance!
Hey!
Charlie! I haven't seen you in so long!!

Hey Charlie! How come you were off school-
We're going outside for a bit now, byeeee!

Let me nap on you.

We've still got an hour until midnight!
Exactly. I need to recharge.

Are you sure you don't mind... um... people seeing...?
Char. Everyone knows we're dating.
Yeah, but you only came out to school people a few months ago...
It was five months ago. Stop worrying about me.
WAIT-

Five!

Four!

Three!

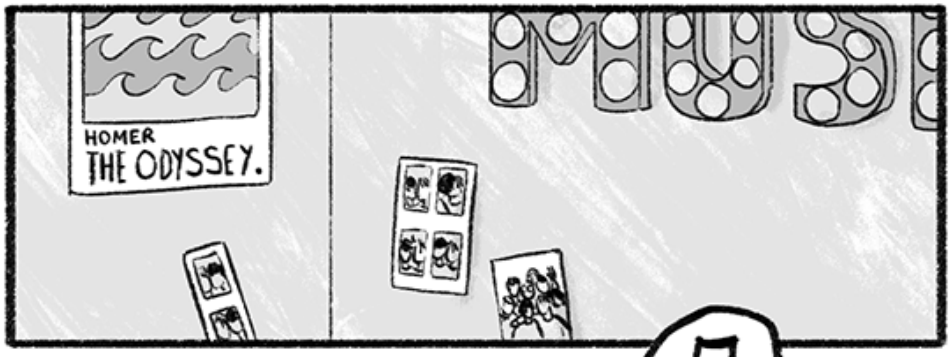
Two!
One!
FSSSSH
BOOM
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!
BOOM

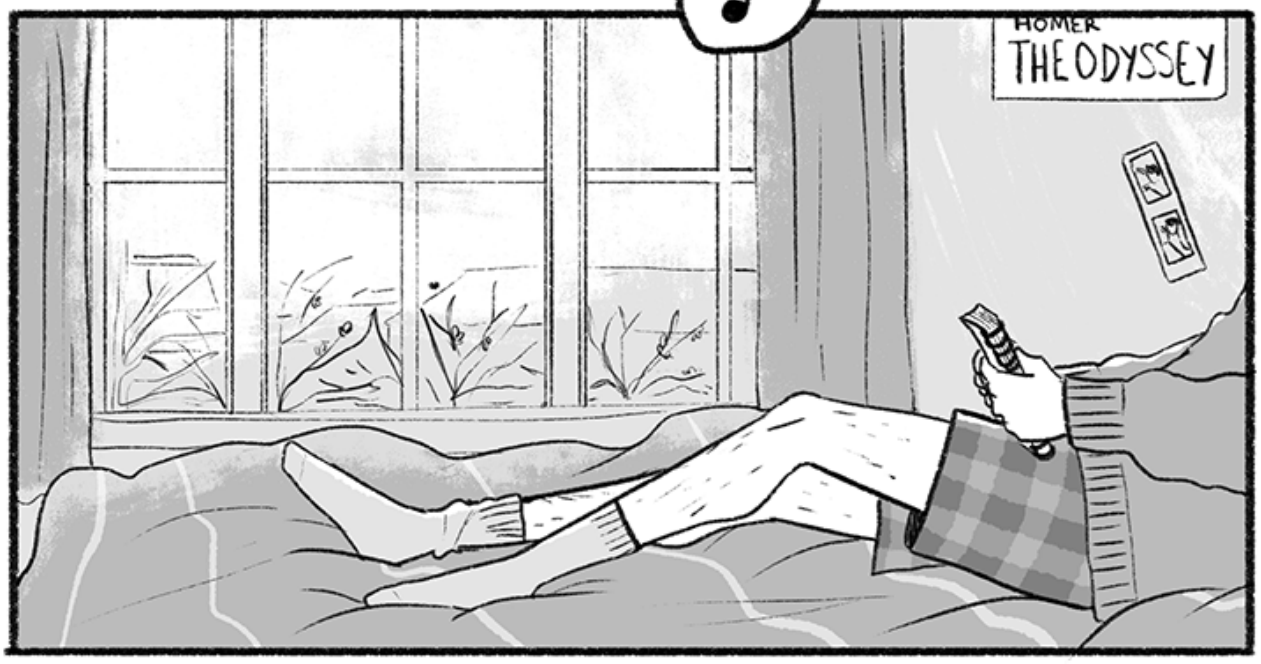
Whoosh
BOOM
FSSSSH
Whoosh
Happy new year
Happy new year
BOOM
FSSSSH

I love you
I love you

BOOM
BOOM
whoosh

MARCH





1192

5/3
Geoff says I need to start writing in my journal again

But I haven't written in here since last summer, and a lot has happened since then.

I can't believe I've been having therapy for like four months already.

I hated the idea at first.

Even though I admitted I needed it.

And things didn't exactly get off to a great start, what with the waiting time, and me just spiraling after that.
Things got bad really fast.
1195

Spending a few weeks in a psych ward was obviously not my plan.

And there were some ups and downs there, sure.

But I think I got lucky because the place I went to was actually helpful.

I started therapy there. Not with Geoff, but the therapist was really nice.

I had a nutritionist, too. I know that isn't the case for all psych wards.

We weren't allowed mobile phones, but I could still call home from the ward phone.

Some of the rules kinda sucked, and some days were awful, but a lot of it was fine. I even made a couple of friends.

At first, I think there was a big part of me that didn't even want to get better. That just wanted to keep pretending I was fine, so I didn't have to put in the effort to change.

I was so scared of losing control.

Eating was something I could control.

But I wasn't fine. I had- have - a mental illness. Anorexia.

More information: https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/

What is anorexia?

Anorexia nervosa is an eating disorder w
of low weight due to limiting their food
also do lots of exercise to get rid of food
may experience cycles of bingeing and
have a distorted view of their body and
fear of gaining weight.

Studies have shown that people wh
"normal" weight can still be diagn
You can't tell if someone has ano

Many people who have anorexia
of control and a desire to be in

I also got diagnosed with OCD, which makes a lot of sense too. Geoff says they're connected.

More information: https://www.ocduk.org/

What is OCD?

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder is an anxiety-
where a person experiences intrusive and un
'obsessions', which result in a person carryin
behaviours or rituals to prevent a perceived
'compulsions'.

OCD can present itself in many forms. I
from OCD, it is likely that your obsessi
impact your daily life significantly in

If you have OCD, it is common to ex
mental health problems as well. Th
OCD difficult to diagnose or treat

Anorexia and OCD, apparently.

Well, yeah, that makes sense.

Haha yeah

Hearing the words was scary, but... also a relief.

Everything finally made a bit of sense. Especially the OCD stuff, which I don't think even Nick really knew about.
It's like... there's all these rules in my head about food.
Ordering and collecting and eating in certain ways at certain times.
And if I break the rules I feel like I'm gonna die.
My brain is literally SO weird.
1200

Being in hospital didn't make me completely free of mental illness. Not even close.

But it got me out of the deep end.

Geoff is my therapist now that I'm back home.

Me and Geoff have talked about what's happened in my life over the past couple of years.

Geoff says it's trauma.

Kind of a dramatic word, I guess, but Geoff says trauma can come from all sorts of things.

Geoff says I'm making progress, but I think I'm realising now that there might never be an 'end'.

But Geoff also says the bad days will get less common. And I can just enjoy my life and hardly ever stress out about food.

Some days I think he's full of shit.

But some days I feel hopeful. I guess I'll have to keep trying.

So I went back to school after the Christmas holidays!

A couple of teachers knew what had happened.

Mr Farouk and Miss Singh have been really supportive.

Especially as rugby has been kinda hard.

I think Tori feels guilty about everything.

She shouldn't, but...

her mental health hasn't been great either.

But she's made this new friend called Michael.

I don't think they're dating, but Tori won't tell me anything.
He's kind of the opposite of her, but they seem to get along in a way I can't quite explain.
They just click.
Maybe like Nick and me.

So I guess there've been some changes.
And maybe I won't be getting 'back to normal', whatever that is.
I think that's okay, though.
It's not gonna be a straightforward journey.
Haha, since when is anything I do straight? Okay, that's not funny.
1210

But really.

I just got the urge.

It wasn't anyone's fault. Relapses happen. Tori told Nick what had happened, and he came back later that night.

We made up.

Mum and Dad even let him stay over to 'keep an eye on me'.

Not really necessary, but I wasn't complaining.

Can you come up here?

U-um- is that - are your parents okay with that?

Please?

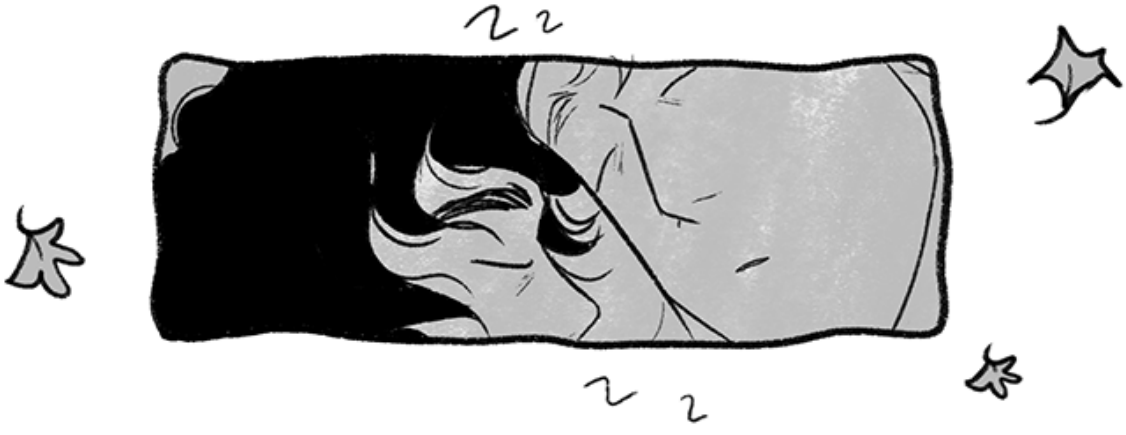
STAND
Pfft, your bed's tiny
Well it's not a double like yours!

ha
ha

Today was
so shit
Yeah

I love Nick.

I love Nick so, so much.



But what I've realised through all of this is that we need other people too.

That doesn't mean our relationship isn't strong.

1218

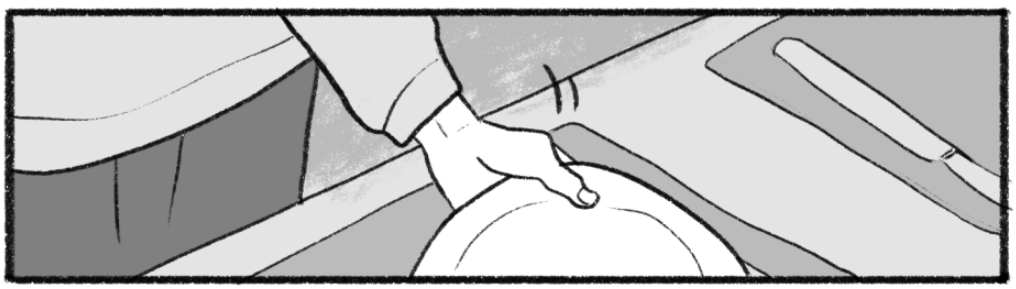
If anything...

I think we're stronger now.

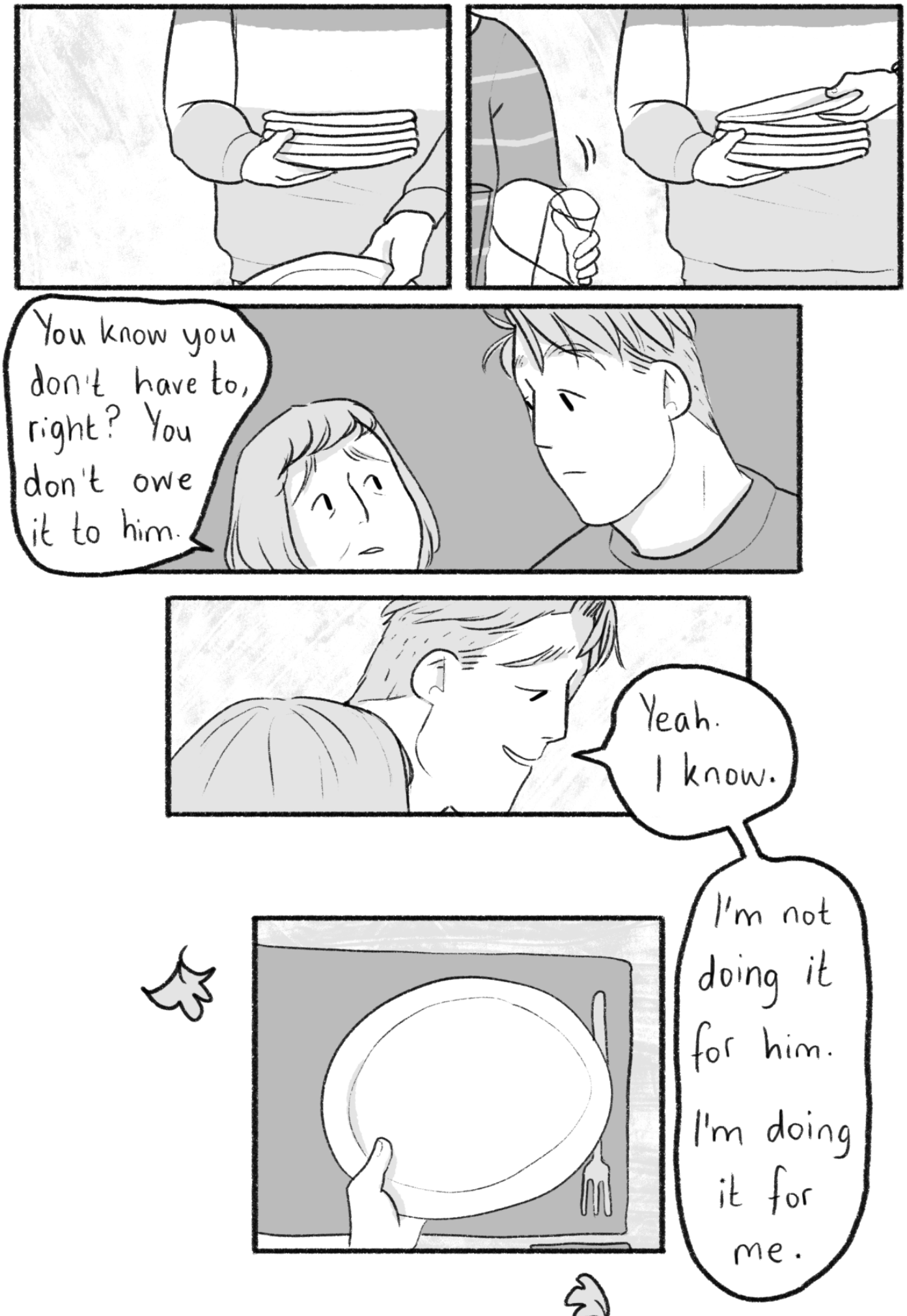
We're leaving for Nick's in like half an hour and you're still in your pyjamas.
Excuse me- I was doing very important therapy homework.
BRIDESHEAD REVISITED
SNAP
Yeah yeah, use your mental illness as an excuse.
Hey-
I'm joking!
... You feeling okay about this Spring-Nelson dinner thing, though?

I know big dinners aren't your fave.
Yeah, I'll be okay. I've planned what I'm having. And I want to be there for Nick. He hasn't seen his dad for like a year, so he's pretty nervous.
JUPITER
He's not out to him yet, is he?
No, I think he wants to do it tonight.

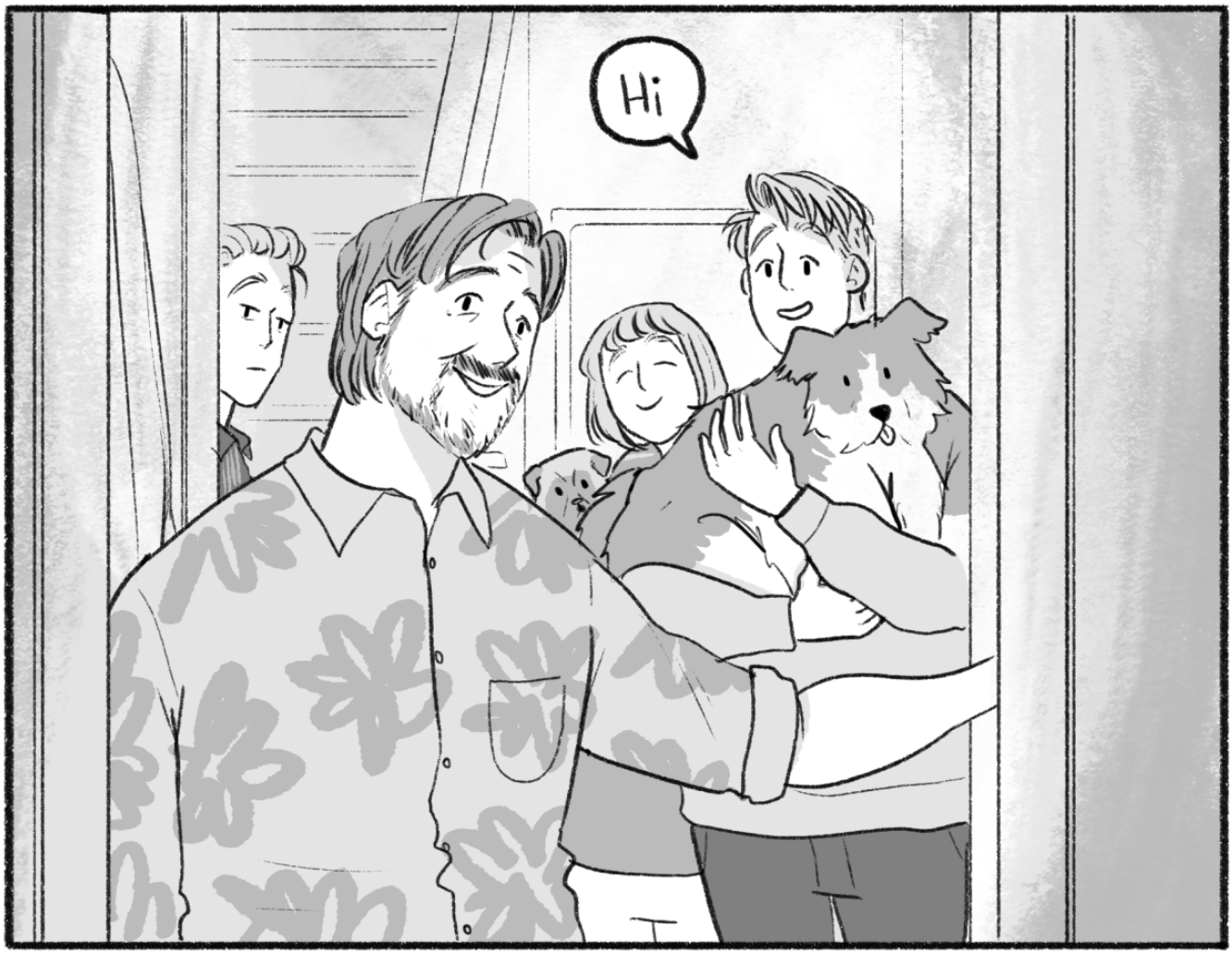
What?
Just wanted to hug you.
I need to go shower.
'Kay.
Michael could have come tonight if you'd wanted.
He's not my boyfriend.
Never said he was!
Hmmph.



You okay, darling?
I know you don't see him much, but... it's only your dad.
I don't know why he insists on these big dinners whenever he comes here but I'm sure it'll be fine.
I think I'm gonna come out to him.


You know you don't have to, right? You don't owe it to him.
Yeah. I know.
I'm not doing it for him.
I'm doing it for me.

DING DONG


Hi

Hi
Doggies!!!

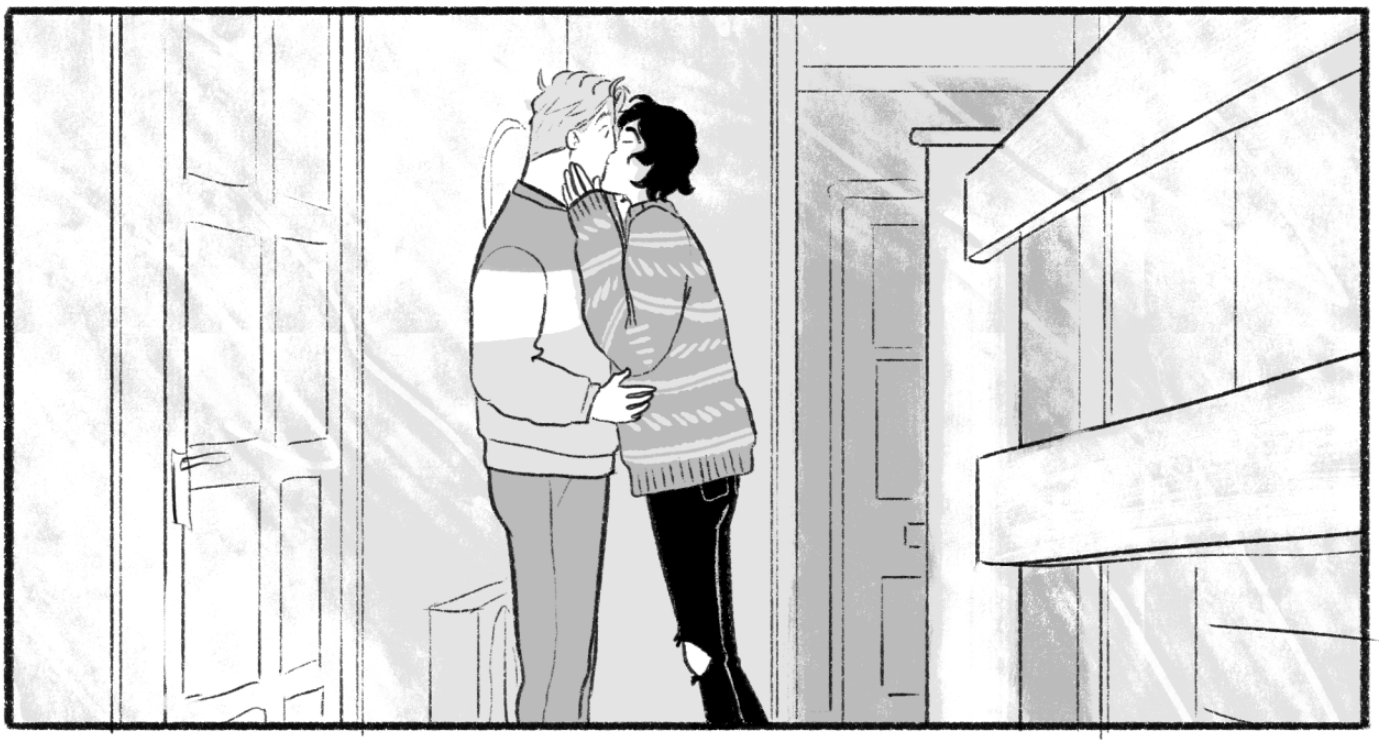
It's so good to meet one of Nicholas' closest friends! Call me Stéphane!
Um, I'm Charlie, nice to meet you! And this is my dad.
Hello, I'm Julio.
How are you, Jane?
Oh, not too bad, Sarah! You?
You cool with this happening? Seems like a lot.
Yeah, well... usually when my dad visits we go out to a restaurant, but he wanted to meet Charlie, and...
Charlie doesn't like restaurants.
Yeah, exactly.
Hello doggies!! I'm your new friend Oliver!!
1227

Hi
Hi

Do we need to pretend to be platonic BFFs in front of your dad?

I mean... yeah, maybe just until I talk to him about us...
But- are you gonna be okay with dinner-
Nick.

1229



You can do this. I'm here for you.
NUDGE
Mate
Oh my God, do not call me 'mate'.
Buddy. Pal. Bro.
Charlie.

Later...

I grew up in the very south of France, near Narbonne!
Ah, not far from Spain, then!
My parents are from the south of Spain. Almería.
But your surname! It is so English! Or ... German?
Well, my father tells me we have a rather complicated family tree...

inhale
exhale
You okay?

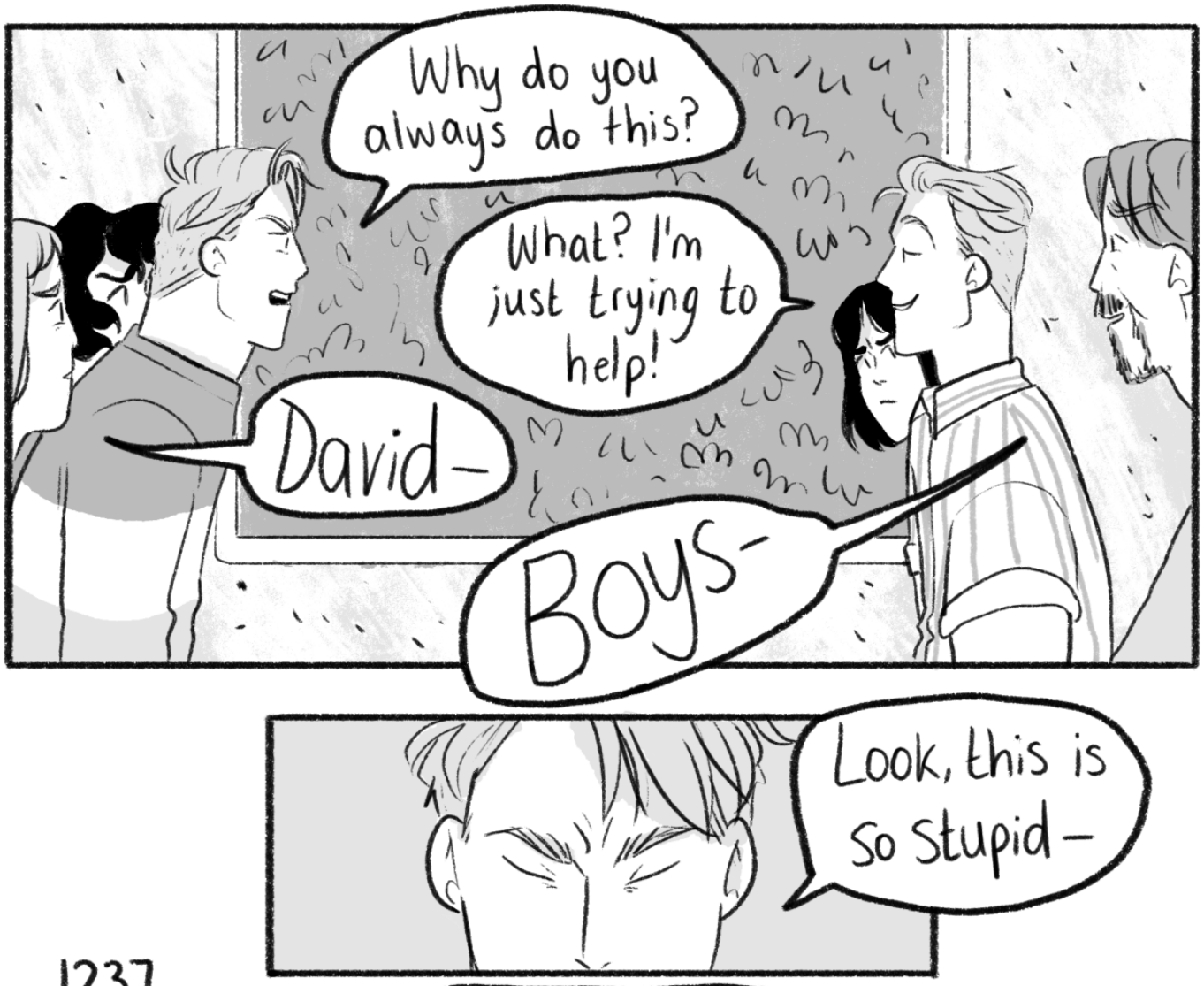
Just... not sure when I'm gonna do it.

Maybe after dinner? I can distract everyone else!
Yeah...
Thanks.

So, Dad.
Has Nick told you how he met Charlie?
No, he hasn't!
...
Um... we got sat together at school and then Charlie joined the rugby team.
Ah, you play rugby, Charlie!
Well.. I'm not very good-

Yeah, Nick was basically obsessed with getting Charlie to join.
Wonder why that was.
You know, the girls love rugby players.
I played a bit of rugby when I was in this country at university. It is a very attractive sport to women!
Have neither of you boys found girlfriends?
...

No, I guess not!
Ah well. There's still time!
...
Well, actually, Nick doesn't need a girlfriend,
because -
DIG
1236
Don't you fucking dare


Why do you always do this?
What? I'm just trying to help!
David–
Boys–

Look, this is so stupid–

1237

Dad, Charlie's my boyfriend. Surprise!